

THE  
*Best*  
SHORT STORIES  
1939

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*and The Yearbook of the American Short Story*

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*Edited by*  
EDWARD J. O'BRIEN



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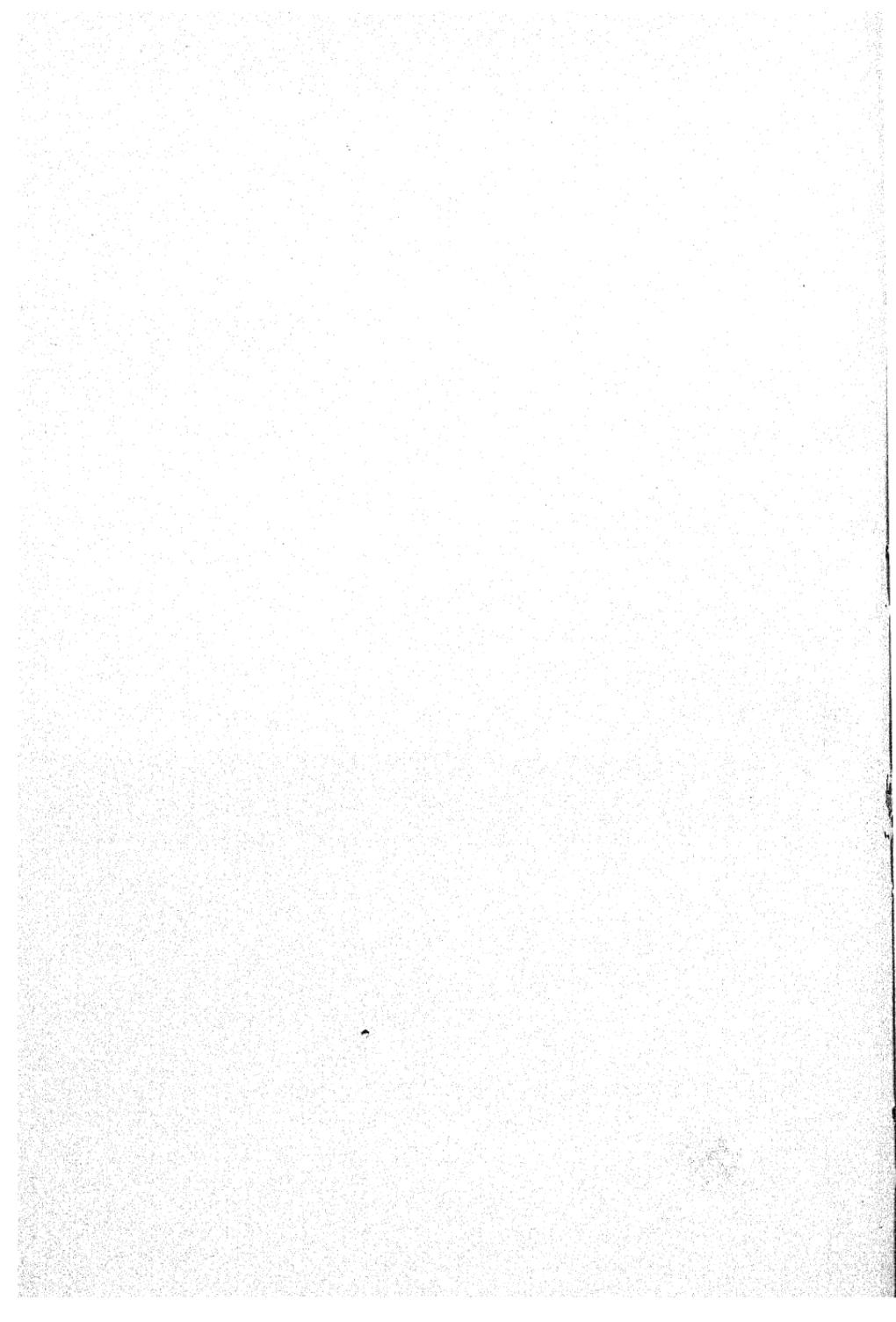
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TO  
RICHARD WRIGHT  
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JESSE STUART



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## BY WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT AND REQUEST

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I shall be grateful to my readers for corrections, and particularly for suggestions leading to the wider usefulness of these annual volumes. In particular, I shall welcome the receipt from authors, editors, and publishers of stories printed during 1939, which have qualities of distinction and yet are not printed in periodicals which are brought regularly to my attention. Editors

of new periodicals are invited to assist me by calling attention to their undertakings.

Communications may be addressed to me at 93, Canfield Gardens, London, N.W. 6, England.

E. J. O.

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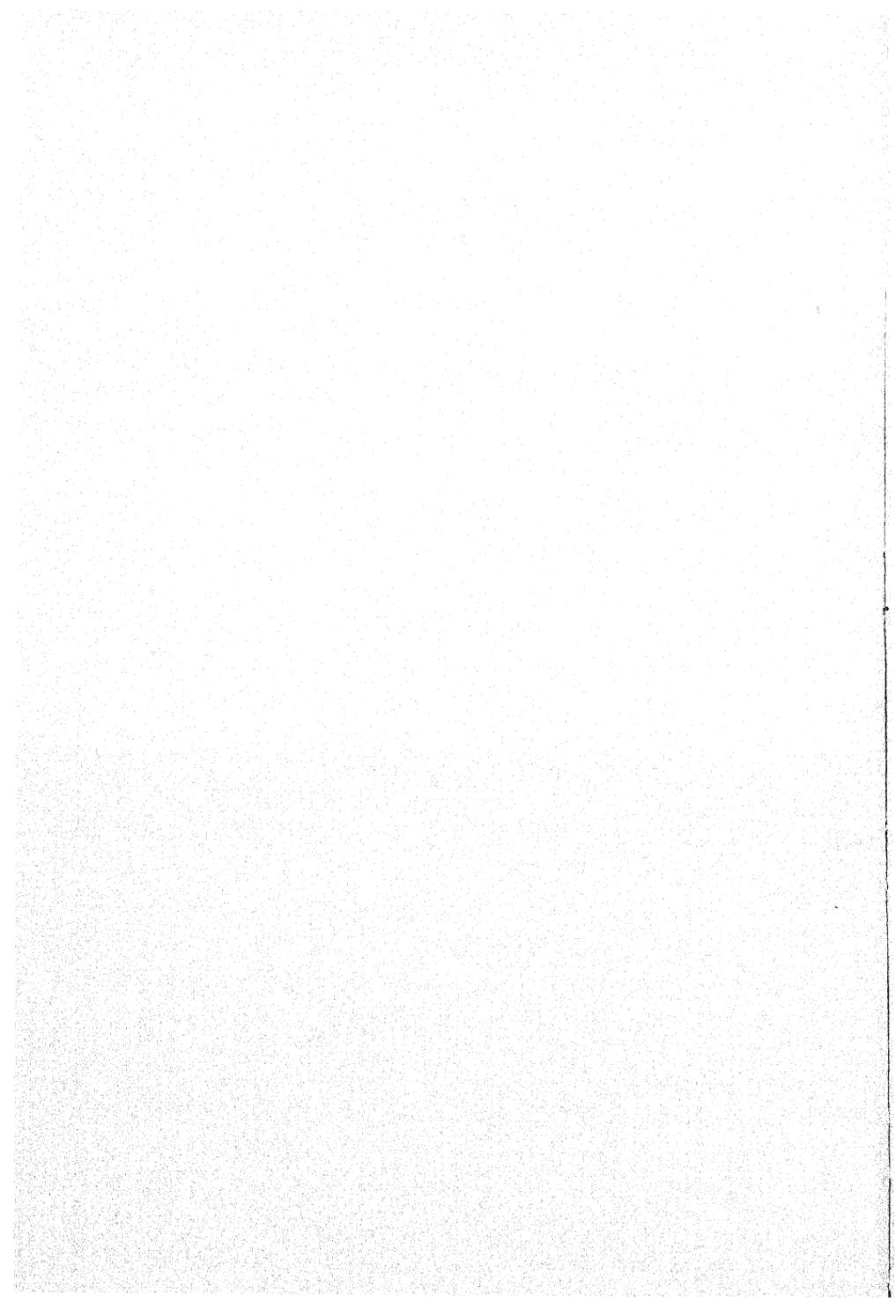
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## INTRODUCTION

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### I

**T**HIS is a time of transition in which every value is questioned and even literary forms are no longer taken for granted. It is not strange that under these circumstances we should find the form of the short story fluid and often somewhat uncertain. Where all values are questioned, we must not be surprised to find that an honest writer is content to satisfy himself with the immediate appearances of a given moment and that he hesitates either to state or to imply more than he can directly perceive. That is no doubt why the critics complain that the American short story has far less narrative content than it had a generation ago.

Personally I am inclined to regret that the tale is no longer the thing, but I have no fears about the ultimate survival of story telling as opposed to story writing. Let us trust the honesty of the short story writer who refuses to tell us the end of the story when he does not know it himself. Twenty-five years ago he would have been glib enough to lie and give us a false ending. Today he is more honest because he is more humble.

I think however that humility can go too far and become false humility. Some American writers, in fact, are beginning to become much too proud of their facts, even when their facts are dead facts. Are we not tending to become a little indifferent to the possibility of interpreting what we perceive? That used to be the job of the poets, but they seem to have failed us lately,

and it looks as if it were now the task of the American novelist and the American short story writer to act as surrogate for the American poet in interpreting imaginatively the meaning of American life.

So far, so good, and you will say that I am speaking obvious platitudes. So I am, but some platitudes seem to need frequent restatement. We have come a long way with the American short story during the past twenty-five years since I first undertook this series of books. We have come so far, in fact, that a great deal more is expected of us as writers than was expected of us in 1914. In fact, our European colleagues are beginning to look toward us to interpret their world as well as our own, even if, and perhaps because, there is a special American way of looking at things. Several European cultures have died in the past few years. There is no longer an Austrian culture in Austria. There is no longer a German culture in Germany. There are no longer Czech and Slovak cultures in Czechoslovakia. I am aware of very little creative activity in Spain and Italy. Hungarian culture is beginning to contemplate its end. In another year it will presumably be an *émigré* culture. Fragments of all these cultures still survive, pitifully destitute, in London, Paris, and New York. Soon they will be only a memory.

It looks as if it were our turn now. What do we propose to build? Ernest Hemingway, Sherwood Anderson, and William Faulkner should be representative enough of our achievement during the past twenty-five years to answer the question, but they all seem to be living with and on their memories in an elegiac mood. The *Story* generation sees clearly enough but hesitates to interpret and to build. I think it ought to undertake the responsibility. If it does not, it will soon be displaced. As Europe crumbles, the responsibility of interpretation in the near future becomes more and more swiftly ours.

## II

To repeat what I have said in these pages in previous years, for the benefit of the reader as yet unacquainted with my standards and principles of selection, I shall point out that I have set myself the task of disengaging the essential human qualities in our contemporary fiction which, when chronicled conscientiously by our literary artists, may fairly be called a criticism of life. I am not all interested in formulae, and organized criticism at its best would be nothing more than dead criticism, as all dogmatic interpretation of life is always dead. What has interested me, to the exclusion of other things, is the fresh, living current which flows through the best American work, and the psychological and imaginative quality which American writers have conferred upon it.

No substance is of importance in fiction unless it is organic substance, that is to say, substance in which the pulse of life is beating. Inorganic fiction has been our curse in the past, and bids fair to remain so, unless we exercise much greater artistic discrimination than we display at present.

The present record covers the period from January 1 to December 31, 1938, inclusive. During this period I have sought to select from the magazine stories published by American authors those which have rendered life imaginatively in organic substance and artistic form. Substance is something achieved by the artist in every act of creation, rather than something already present, and accordingly a fact or group of facts in a story only attains substantial embodiment when the artist's power of compelling imaginative persuasion transforms them into a living truth. The first test of a short story, therefore, in any qualitative analysis, is to decide how vitally compelling the writer makes his selected facts or incidents. This may conveniently be called the test of substance.

But a second test is necessary if the story is to take rank above other stories. The true artist will seek to shape this living substance into the most beautiful and satisfying form by skillful selection and arrangement of his material, and by the most direct and appealing presentation of it in portrayal and characterization.

The short stories which I have examined in this study, as in previous years, have fallen naturally into four groups. The first consists of those stories which fail, in my opinion, to survive either the test of substance or the test of form. These stories are not listed in the yearbook.

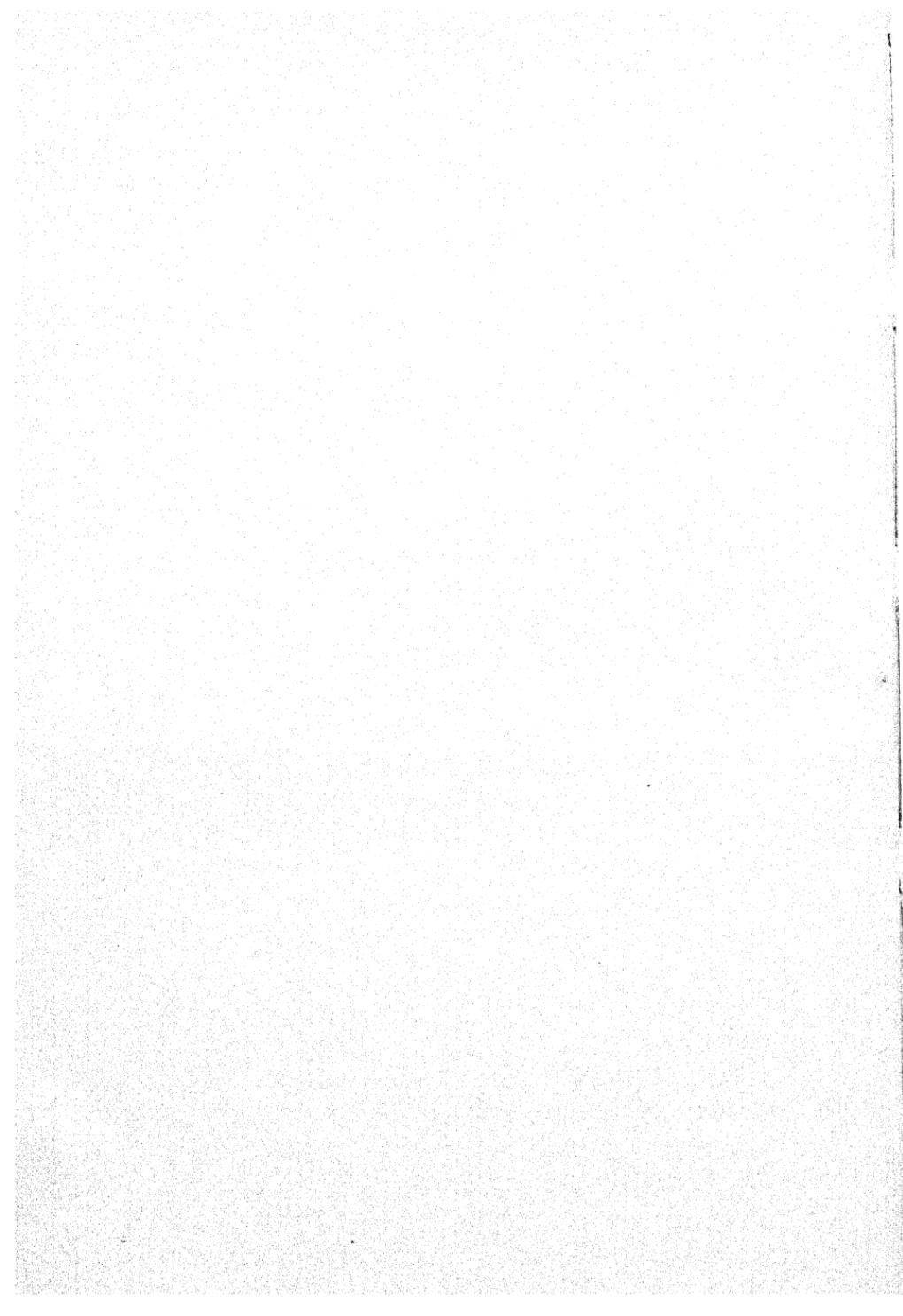
The second group consists of those stories which may fairly claim that they survive either the test of substance or the test of form. Each of these stories may claim to possess either distinction of technique alone, or more frequently, I am glad to say, a persuasive sense of life to which the reader responds with some part of his own experience. Stories included in this group are indicated in the yearbook index by a single asterisk prefixed to the title.

The third group, which is composed of stories of still greater distinction, includes such narratives as may lay convincing claim to a second reading, because each of them has survived both tests, the test of substance and the test of form. Stories included in this group are indicated in the yearbook index by two asterisks prefixed to the title.

Finally, I have recorded the names of a small group of stories which possess, I believe, the even finer distinction of uniting genuine substance and artistic form in a closely woven pattern with such sincerity that these stories may fairly claim a position in American literature. If all these stories by American authors were republished, they would not occupy more space than a few novels of average length. My selection of them does not imply the critical belief that they are great stories. A year which produced one great story would be an exceptional one. It is simply to be taken as meaning that I have found the equivalent of a

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few volumes worthy of reproduction among all the stories published during the period under consideration. These stories are indicated in the yearbook by three asterisks prefixed to the title and are listed in the special 'Roll of Honor.' The general and particular results of my study will be found explained and carefully detailed in the supplementary part of this volume.



## THE BLUE SASH<sup>1</sup>

BY WARREN BECK

I WAS all set to go, and then this thing had to happen. I even had all my stuff packed in the car that morning. When I drove around to his apartment to pick him up, he was supposed to fling in his bags and hop right in for our little spin to the West Coast. Not that we were in any hurry to get to Los Angeles — we had a month before our jobs began out there — but we'd both saved up a little dough, and we proposed to wander along at our own sweet will squandering it, sampling the grandeurs of nature, especially the wine and women of all the sister states we could string onto our route without actually traveling in circles.

Maybe his having the money saved up was what made the difference. Having cash in hand to pay the bill leads to all kinds of foolishness, I've noticed. Maybe what really threw him was knowing he had enough to buy a marriage license and furniture for an apartment and get himself two or three new suits besides. And then too the Los Angeles job was just a leap in the dark, even if he did have friends in the outfit, whereas his job here was a sure thing, with pretty good prospects.

He was salesman for a company that made some kind of heavy

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machinery. That's how we met. He used the planes quite a lot for business trips, and once when he was waiting around to see if the wind was going to let the ship get off the ground, he strayed into the hangar and watched me bossing the mechanics, and we got to talking. A few nights later we happened to meet, and he asked me to have a beer with him, and we talked some more. Well, we've done plenty of that since.

It may seem kind of funny that we got to be friends, he being a college graduate with a white-collar job, but I guess we just took to each other. We both liked to drink and talk ad midnightum, as he always put it, and we hit it off that way. My dad used to say that talk is a three-legged race, a damned awkward nuisance and cause for stumbling unless the pair just naturally hit the same stride. Not that I'm setting myself up as the equal of a college graduate in every way. But I'm no untutored clod, either. My dad was a steeplejack, and he never worked except in fine weather, at twenty-five bucks a day or more, and he spent his leisure reading Robert Ingersoll and Mark Twain and expatiating on them and other violent subjects to anybody who would listen. He taught me to read, and he taught me to answer back, and I guess he taught me a lot of other things I'm not conscious of. He wouldn't have been surprised to see me out drinking beer and spieling night after night with a college graduate. Dad himself always said he wished he could have an evening's conversation with Teddy Roosevelt.

But about Bob — it couldn't have been just the good job that kept him here. At one time he was ready to follow me in the matter of jobs. My thought was that if we went to L.A., it was not for better jobs, but for variety and adventure befitting young men of some vigor and curiosity. And on the other hand, for him, at odd moments, the thought was that if he stayed here in town, he'd settle down and marry Helen.

Many's the time we'd argued about it. Listen, pal, I'd say,

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you're not the kind of guy who likes to sit down in a booth and stay there all evening, eating all your pretzels out of one bowl — you're like me, you want to barge along. Isn't that the way it is with everything?

Look, he said once, that's because the beer is just about as bad one place as the next. But if you could find one place where everything was the best you'd ever had, wouldn't you stay there all evening?

Well, I told him, the beer isn't everything. Part of it is the going and coming here and there, getting around where things are different, having a change now and then — new faces and so forth.

And part of the time he agreed. We still had an old-fashioned evening together once in a while, and we still packed a lot into 'em. It came natural to us, and we kind of bucked each other up. Dames that fell in with us just once remembered us, and everybody in the bars kept an eye out for us because they liked to watch us roll by under full sail. But then he quit me altogether on these parties. When I began to turn up without him everybody was as surprised as if they'd seen a pair of Siamese twins sawed in two. All I could tell 'em was the shameful truth that he'd fallen for a girl.

Now and then I'd meet him when he was with Helen. If I had a dame, he and I would just say hello. If I was alone, he'd always call me over and buy me a beer and we'd talk awhile. That's the way it was the first time I met Helen. She was always nice to me too. She's a good girl; I'll say that for her. Pretty enough for the movies, and smart, too. She was all for him from the start — you could see that. And he was quite in favor of her too, in a different way from what I saw him show with the dames we used to chase. He and this Helen would talk like a game of ping-pong, where the ball flies back and forth and neither one misses, and most of the time I couldn't even see it. She had

been to college too, and she could follow him when he was just a blur of dust to me. They'd try to take me along, but I'd just finish my beer and wish them a merry evening and leave them to their world. That always left me feeling lonesome, though, and I'd usually page the bars until I picked up a quick one, whatever she looked like.

I kept telling him he was in for it if he didn't watch his step. He just laughed at me.

No doubt you're a very hard gent, he says, and a great hand with monkey wrenches and bar babes, but don't try to tell me how to take care of myself.

I will try, I says. I'll more than try; I'll tell you. If you're man enough, you can take my advice. But if you don't, we'll know how much value to give all these large phrases of yours. I'll tell you how to save yourself, I says. Blow your job.

What? he says.

Come on, now, I told him, if you're out for a good time, you can't tie yourself down to a salary. I'll blow my job too. We'll take my car and make for Californy, exercising our manly instincts for fun along the way. Once in Los Angeles, we could line up something that would feed us while we investigated the customs and cuties of Aimee McPherson's diocese.

Just like that, he says, huh? A couple of conquering heroes, huh? Haven't you heard there's a depression?

Don't be vulgar, I says. As long as there's planes for me to doctor and monkey mechanics for me to boss, I live above that sort of thing.

If we barged into California like a couple of forty-niners who'd dropped behind with tire trouble, you know what we'd find to do? he says. Join a Townsend Club, that's all.

You see, I tell him. It's got you. You're worried about your job, your future, your prospects. You'll be a married man next thing you know.

Not at all, he says. That's not what's holding me back from this belated gold rush you propose. I just want to eat something besides beans, and smoke the first half of my own cigarettes instead of the second half of somebody else's. I'm not denying there's merit in your scheme, but the least we could do would be to get some information in advance.

For instance, I says.

For instance, write what friends we have in L.A. and ask them whether there's a toe-hold for us, he says.

I took him up on that. Never let it be said, I answered him, that we failed to do the least we could do. We've been a very doing pair of men, and our sun is not yet set. And so I got some paper and envelopes right away, and we began writing notes to any people we knew out there, and I kidded him along until he'd turned out half a dozen.

But the more I thought about it next day, the more I agreed with him that the chances were against us. I was almost as surprised as he was when we both clicked. A couple of flier friends of mine found me a place practically as good as the one here, and one of his college buddies knew of a humble berth he could slip into when another guy's contract was up in three months.

Then of course we were into it all over again. He'd taken me up about the letters, and so at least he had to admit that his going was an open question. He wavered pro and con for the whole month. I thought this Helen must be putting the heat on him to do right by her, but he swore she was keeping out of it and said she wanted him to do what he really preferred. I could hardly believe it. Maybe there are women like that, but I never knew one. But he swore that's the way she was.

Then something happened. Maybe everything I'd been needling into him began to take effect. Or maybe he and Helen had some kind of blow-up. I don't know for sure. He never told

me. But he was dour as a wet cat for a week, and on my hands every evening, and then all of a sudden one night he says he'd go to California with me. He laid two more scotches on top of what he already had, and we went out and telegraphed the joyful news that they could expect us in six weeks. That gave us the month for the trip, and two weeks to quit our jobs and voice our farewells around about the old haunts, which we did with our usual thoroughness.

All that two weeks he never said a word about changing his mind again and not going. In fact, he seemed quite determined, and when his friends kidded him about dropping a good job, he kidded them back about getting stuck in a rut like they were. He wasn't very cheerful, but you could have put that down partly to leaving the old town and job and everything — not just this Helen. Anyhow, if he was wavering, I never got a whiff of it. Maybe he wasn't. Maybe it hit him all in a minute that morning, the way he said it did. All that stuff about a blue sash. Jesus! It's enough to make a man's head swim.

It was like this. I pulled up at his apartment house ten minutes early, blew a tattoo on my horn, and bounded up the stairs to help him carry down his stuff. I found him with suitcases spread on the bed, bureau drawers standing open, and clothes all over the room.

All set? says I, just to show him I thought he wasn't so prompt. No, he says, and goes ahead with what he's doing.

Then I see that he's not putting things into the cases, he's taking 'em out.

What the hell, I said.

I'm not going, he said, without looking up.

I didn't say anything. I walked over and sat down on the window-sill. I looked out at the car, with my stuff in it. I lit a cigarette. I took one drag and then I threw the damned thing out the window. Still he didn't say anything. I was sore as hell

for a minute. I wasn't going to let him know it, though. And pretty soon it dawned on me that he didn't have to go to California if he didn't want to and he had a right to change his mind if he wanted to. I lit another cigarette.

Listen, pal, I says. Just one word. Why?

He didn't look at me. He just went on tossing socks back into a drawer.

Maybe it's enough that I'm not going, he says. Maybe you don't really care to know why.

Did you think I was just asking out of politeness? I said.

Oh, I know, he said. I do owe you some kind of an excuse.

You needn't feel that way about it, I yelled at him.

You needn't either, he said, in a kind of sad voice. The only trouble is, I don't quite know how to explain it to you.

If you'll make it simple and use short words, maybe I can get it, I said.

Please don't be that way about it, he said. It's nothing against you. You ought to know that.

Oh, all right, I said. It's okay, whatever it is.

Well, he said, and then he stopped and straightened up and looked out the window as though he was trying to remember what he was going to say.

I'm out of cigarettes, I said.

He fumbled his out of his shirt pocket and threw 'em to me, and waited till I lit one and tossed him the pack.

Well, he said, I saw a girl in a blue sash.

And then he stopped.

Oh, so that's it, I said, and laughed, even if I didn't feel like it. You saw a girl in a blue sash. That makes it all perfectly clear.

I know, I know, he says. It doesn't make sense. But Jesus, he says, you got to try to make it make sense, don't you?

It all depends, I says.

He said nothing, and so I went on.

Just where did you see this girl in a blue sash, I says, in a dream?

No, he says. I didn't see her in a dream. I was awake. I was up too — it was about seven o'clock this A.M. — I was just finishing packing — and I looked out the window and there across the street went a girl in a blue sash. Anyhow, I guess you'd call it a sash. It was like a belt, but it was wider than a belt, and — well, she didn't need it on that dress, if you see what I mean. She was just wearing it for adornment, sort of, and that's why I call it a sash.

I follow you, I says. Adornment. A thing like this is just a flourish, kind of. Whereas a belt holds up your pants, and that's utility.

Quite, he says. Oh, quite.

Then he goes on with his unpacking without another word, as though he'd told me everything. I saw I'd have to get him back on the track again.

But I wonder about one thing, I says. Why should this girl be so all adorned with a blue sash walking down the street at seven o'clock in the morning?

I suppose she was on her way to work, he says. I suppose she's somebody's maid.

Don't laugh, boys, I says. Don't laugh, boys. She's somebody's maid.

He looked over at me for a second and scowled.

The way I feel right now, he says, you're too goddam bright for me. Just too goddam bright, or something. You don't exactly dazzle me, but you give me a pain in the head.

Mine's in the neck, I says.

I know, I know, he says, and he sat down on the bed and rumpled up his hair with both hands. You've got a right

to be sore. I promised I'd make this trip with you, but —

That isn't it, I says. The promise is nothing. The trip is nothing. What gets me is seeing an old friend slipping into mental breakdown. A girl in a blue sash walks down the street, and you decide not to go to L.A. with me. Do you suppose if I was to hire somebody to drive a flock of white rats down the street the opposite way you'd pack up again and go?

At that he jumped up and went on taking his shirts out of his suitcase and piling them back into the bureau drawer. It was like he was piling up something between him and Los Angeles and piling up something between him and me. I felt like hell about it. I knew right then he was a good guy even if and when screwy. He finished putting the shirts back in the drawer. He looked kind of relieved, but he looked like he felt bad about it too.

Think nothing of it, I told him. Keep your shirts in your bureau drawer. L.A. can get along without you. And I guess I can find my way across the country alone.

Look, he says, it's no use explaining, but I got to try.

If it's about the girl in the blue sash, I says, don't bother. Every man has got to have some secrets.

Listen, he says, and try to think seriously for once. As I told you, this sash was a broad blue ribbon —

You can't imagine how funny that sounds to me, I told him.

What? he says.

A broad blue ribbon, I says. Where do they give out those ribbons? Do they walk the broads round a ring, or show 'em in cages?

He went right on. He never even smiled.

It was a kind of gay contrast to the pink dress she was wearing, he says. She was stepping right along, as if she felt dressed up. Maybe she was thinking somebody might notice the blue sash.

At seven o'clock in the A.M.? I asks.

Maybe she was thinking about wearing the blue sash that afternoon or evening, on her way back from work, he says.

Oh, says I, so maybe that's it. You think she's coming back the same way she went, right past your door. So that's why you're unpacking and settling down again in the same old convenient room, only one flight up and such a comfortable bed.

He made a face at me as if I was a bad smell and waved me down with his hand, but I went right on.

It seems to me, I says, that you're acting very impulsive. What do you know about this girl? Did you get a good look at her? How do you know you'll like what the blue ribbon is hung on?

Don't you ever think of anything else? he asks me.

Often, I says, I think of liquor, or sometimes maybe food, or now and then I think of the pleasures of our philosophical conversations, but mostly I stick to my specialty. You know what the French saying is, about every man having his own kind of gout.

Listen, stupid, he said, why should I change all my plans about going just so I can lurk at this window until a girl in a blue sash comes back and I can coax her up here? Why? Why?

Amen, amen, I says. In God's name, why? Why, when we're all set for a cross-country ride, with a chance to take our pick of all the prairie flowers, should you go nuts over one girl in a blue sash?

He ran his fingers through his hair and threw his arms up straight over his head.

Can't you get it through your skull that I'm not panting after her that way? he shouted at me. For one thing, she was kind of thick-ankled and heavy in the hips. And I never even saw her face. And besides, that wasn't what her blue sash made me think

of. And most of all, I'm quite a little preoccupied just now with the idea of marrying Helen — if she'll have me.

Well, I says, this sure is a sudden shift in the subject of our little chat, but if that's what's worrying you — whether Helen will have you — why, be calm. My observation of women leads me to think that Helen will have you. And then you'll have her, and you'll both have each other, and neither one of you will have anything else.

Yes, yes, I know, he says. We've been all over that before. Only it happens that I've changed my opinion.

By that time I was kinda punch-drunk with it all, and hopeless, and I just let my tongue ramble on, just to fill in the bare spaces all around.

Listen, I says, was it this way? You looked at this girl's kinda thick ankles and her heavy backside, and you thought Helen wasn't so bad after all, huh?

God damn you, he says to me, shut up. And listen to me. I'm going to tell you all about this, even if your one-way mind can't grasp it. I've got to tell you, because you need it. Look, did you ever hear of the Ancient Mariner?

Would that be Noah? I asks.

No, it wouldn't be Noah, he says. The Ancient Mariner is in a poem —

How strange, then, says I, that I don't know him. I live with poetry. It is my one consuming passion. Like to hear me recite?

This Ancient Mariner, he goes on, got the low-down on himself. He began to see what life was all about —

Always far-sighted, these mariner guys, I put in.

Shut up, he says, and listen. The Ancient Mariner would get a hunch now and then that he ought to tell this or that man what he had found out, for the man's own good. That's how the poem begins — three men are going to a wedding feast, and the Ancient Mariner stops one of them.

Maybe she was thinking about wearing the blue sash that afternoon or evening, on her way back from work, he says.

Oh, says I, so maybe that's it. You think she's coming back the same way she went, right past your door. So that's why you're unpacking and settling down again in the same old convenient room, only one flight up and such a comfortable bed.

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You sure stop me, I says.

But I can't tell you anything, he says. No, it's no good trying. You've got to see it for yourself.

He sat down on the chair again and stared at the floor.

Come, come, I says, wasn't I promised the details about the case of the girl in the blue sash? It doesn't seem like much of a substitute for your esteemed company all the way to California, but it's something.

Listen, he says, in a kind of solemn way, I looked out of the window this morning and there she went, walking along kind of briskly, adorned in that blue sash, and I could see she wasn't much to look at, at least not her shape, and I knew she must be on her way to a day's hard work, and yet she had tried to fix herself up and make herself attractive —

Well, for God's sake, I said, is that your discovery for the morning? They all do that, all the time.

But why? he says. Not just to pick up a date for a good time. They're always hoping they'll find what every woman wants —

I've got it, I yelled.

Listen, he says. What they want is a husband and a home and children — something permanent. And they have a right to it, too.

They have a right to it? I says. How do you figure that?

Because that's the way things are, he says. There's got to be homes and children to keep the human race going. And the women want to do their part — they have an instinct for it — but they have to depend on the men.

I'll say they do, I says.

What I mean, he says, is that a man has to establish a home for a woman and give her and her children some protection and security — something permanent.

Yeh, I guess that's what a lot of 'em want, I says.

And here goes this girl I saw this morning, he says, walking along through a world of bums like you and me, wearing a blue sash for adornment, making the best of herself, and hoping for the best, and keeping her chin up. In a world of bums. In a world of heels like you and me. Women are in a tough spot, I tell you.

Maybe they are, I says. Maybe that's just the way it is, as you said. But that's something I don't care about. I didn't make the world, and it's not my business to run it. What I want to know is, are you going to marry Helen just because you feel sorry for her?

He looked straight at me for a minute, and then he smiled at me, a warm smile.

You're a smart guy, he says. That's a sensible question, he says. I've been asking myself that this morning. I wouldn't marry her out of pity — that would be condescending. That wouldn't do either one of us any good. No, I'm going to marry her because I love her.

The old, old story, I says. The sweetest ever told. And what do you get out of it, may I ask.

I get the feeling of being a man, he says, of playing my part. And I get the feeling of really knowing what love is — something two people build together that time can't tear down.

Well, I says, it may sound like the music of the spheres to you, but what I detect by way of principal tunes is the dull crash of the monthly grocery bill and the prolonged wail of a colicky baby. You once asked me did I know there was a depression on, and I now return you the question, practically good as new.

There have been depressions before, he says, and they haven't stopped the women. Remember that women have borne and raised their children on the edge of the frontier, if only there were

men who were men enough to protect their families with a stockade and get them a little grain and wild game. We're all better off now. The depression is no excuse.

Not for a lineal descendant of Daniel Boone, I says, of course not. But I'm from one of the lesser breeds without the law.

Daniel Boone the hell, he says. On this issue every man writes his own coat of arms. The question is simply can he love a woman or can't he.

Can he love a woman? I answers.

Meaning, he says, can he marry and make a family and hold it up with his courage. I've just realized that that's what loving means. If a man really loves a woman, that's what he wants to do for her.

That all depends on how you look at it, I says.

That's how I look at it, he says.

So you're going to be married, I says.

Yeh, he says, and I've tried my best to tell you why.

Well, pal, I says, yours are profound thoughts, but I leave 'em with you, because I'm on my way to California, and you sure taught me one thing, not to look at any dames in blue sashes before I've had my morning coffee.

And so I walks out and leaves him sitting there looking at nothing as if he was trying to add up a lot of figures in his head.

I didn't go to Los Angeles. I didn't want to go without him. I haven't seen much of him since, though. We both got our old jobs back, and he still comes out to the airport. We've had a few beers together, too, now and then, but usually he's with Helen, and when I've been with him alone I could tell he was thinking about her, and about things he doesn't mention because he thinks I wouldn't understand.

He's going to be married next week.

It's taken a lot of the joy out of my life, I tell you. I don't know how to figure it any more. Sometimes it gives me the creeps to think what happened to him all at once, just because he saw a girl in a blue sash. But then I tell myself nothing like that is going to happen to me.

## VISION IN THE SEA<sup>1</sup>

BY RONALD CALDWELL

**T**HE ship lay a mile out. We saw her masts first and did not speak for some time, focusing our eyes until she assumed form and depth. We were bewildered. Week after week we had watched for her and had seen nothing but water and sky. Al rubbed his eyes and I lighted a cigarette. Then we grinned at each other.

'Am I nuts?' said Al.

'We're both nuts.'

We looked at the ship again. A wind blew and, even as we stared, a fog appeared from nowhere. Whitecaps sprang up on the surface of the sea. But the ship was still there.

'I must be seeing things,' Al said.

'It's there, all right.'

'Looks like a South Sea boat. Let's swim out and get a good look at her.'

'It's too cold.'

I knew Al could do it all right. He used to be a fighter and he swam a lot because he said it was better than running. I don't know how good he is now.

'How about a rowboat?' he said. 'We could rent one cheap.'

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by The New Mexico Quarterly.

'We'd freeze.'

He continued to stare at the ship, sitting with his hands clasped under his knees and his back arched. He had large bony hands with big red and white knuckles.

The fog grew denser. In a few minutes, the ship disappeared. Al tried to peer through the fog but it was too thick. We arose and walked up the beach until we came to a restaurant near the pier. It had grown cold, so we got coffee. Al kept talking about the ship: it sure as hell looked like a South Sea sailing vessel. He had a swell book about Moorea. There were no motor-cars or adding machines, or bills to pay there. The book cost him two dollars.

'I'm going out there in the morning,' he said. 'Maybe they'll let us look it over.'

'O.K. I'll go too, if it's still there.'

'It'll be there all right,' he replied grimly.

At that hour the restaurant was deserted and the waiter stood at the far end of the counter, staring out of the window. As soon as we were finished he moved to our end, wiping his hands on his apron.

'Anything else?' he said.

'Are there many boats here now?' I asked.

'There's some rowboats, I guess.'

'Any big boats out in the bay?' said Al.

The waiter's eyes brightened. He wiped his hands again.

'There might be a fishing barge. You fellows fish?'

'I mean a real ship. A four-master.'

The waiter scowled.

'Nope. Ain't seen a thing.'

Al looked at me. We returned to the hotel without speaking. Al frowned all the way and smoked cigarettes incessantly. As soon as we got to our room he took off his coat and shoes and climbed on the bed.

'That guy's nuts,' he said.

'Yeah. Those guys only see what's in front of their nose.'

I picked up the paper and began turning the pages. There was little news: a plane crash, another strike. Finally I said: 'Nice dance here tonight. What do you say we call up Peggy and her girl friend?'

'Dance?' he snorted. 'Who the hell wants to dance?'

'It's only four bits.'

'I don't care if they give your four bits. Hand me that South Sea book of mine, will you?'

The next morning she was still there. We went down early, after breakfast, and when we stood on the sands we could see her lying there like a dream. The fog was still thick, hovering just over the sea, and even as we waited began to creep in, moving over the ship and curling about her masts like ghostly fingers. Al started quickly down the beach.

'I'm going to get a boat,' he said.

'It looks pretty rough,' I said, catching up with him.

'For Christ's sake, don't you think I ever rowed a boat before?'

'Yeah, but look at that fog.'

'The hell with the fog.'

He moved so fast I could hardly keep up with him. His mouth was set in grim, tight lines. When we reached the dock the fog had already obscured the ship and was rolling onto the beach. We stood there, unspeaking, until it reached us, gray and clammy wet, and then we started back. There wasn't anything we felt like saying. Al bummed a cigarette from me. His eyes were blank with despair.

'I guess that guy was right,' he said. 'I just dreamed I saw it. I've been thinking about it too much.'

We stayed at the hotel all day, waiting for the fog to lift, but at night it still clung to the sea and dock and land. It was so thick we could hardly see the beach. At ten o'clock we got on the

streetcar. Al was silent and I tried to do a lot of talking, but there didn't seem to be much to say.

The next Saturday we were out on the beach again. We got off work at twelve and by three o'clock had checked our suitcase at the hotel. We went down to the beach almost immediately. The fog was still in.

'Don't it ever go away?' Al said bitterly.

We walked out to the boat dock but it was just as bad there; we couldn't see the ship at all. There were two guys in blue dungarees swinging a rowboat up on a davit and we watched the water drip from the wet hull into the cold dark waters below.

'Do you know when this fog'll clear up?' Al asked them.

'You got me, bud,' one of them replied without looking up.

'Think it will clear up tonight?'

'You can't tell. Sometimes it only stays a couple of hours and sometimes it stays a couple of weeks.'

'Is there a boat out there?' I asked.

'What kind of a boat? A fishing barge?'

'No,' said Al. 'A big four-master.'

The other guy dried his hands and swung around. 'Yeah,' he said. 'I saw one anchored out there last week, but the fog's been in every day since. I guess it's still there.'

'What's it doing?' said Al.

'I don't know. It don't look like a fishing barge.'

'It isn't.'

'It's hard to say what it is. It might be a gambling boat.'

'What?'

'It isn't a gambling boat,' I said quickly.

'You're damn right it's not a gambling boat,' said Al.

'Well, I don't know what it is. It might be a gambling boat or it might belong to some rich guy. Chances are it belongs to a director or a movie star.'

'Let's get going, Al,' I said, pulling his arm. I dragged him up the gangway.

'That guy's lucky he didn't get his face smashed in,' said Al, looking back over his shoulder. 'He's Goddamn lucky.'

When we returned to the hotel, we listened in the lobby to a football game over the radio but Al couldn't sit still, so we went up to the room. It was dark and cold outside and we tried to read some magazines, but there didn't seem to be anything good in them, so Al picked up his book again and began looking at the pictures. We knew them by heart. Last summer we had read a lot of folders about Tahiti and we looked up steamship fares but were afraid to quit our jobs. We kept books all day and got damn tired of it. On Saturdays and Sundays we went out with Peggy and her girl friend. This summer we wanted to do something different. We wanted to get some fun out of life, somehow. We weren't sure what we wanted to do, but the South Seas sounded like a swell place.

At five o'clock the phone rang and I answered it.

'It's Peggy,' I shouted to Al. 'Want to go to a show?'

'Hell, no.'

'She's got tickets to the *Chinese*.'

'You go.'

I told her we couldn't go, and hung up. I tried to read again but Al ran out of cigarettes and said: 'Let's go for a walk.'

'Where'll we go?'

'Any place. Any place.'

I laid my magazine aside and put on my coat. I felt like screaming, but I guess men don't scream. The room was blue with cigarette smoke.

It was cold outside. We walked briskly.

'Peggy's a nice girl,' I said.

'What of it?'

'I mean we're getting pretty old.'

He glared at me.

'Listen. I punched a bag for five years and now I'm punching an adding machine. If you think I'm going to do that the rest of my life, you're crazy.'

'Maybe you're right,' I said glumly.

We walked about three blocks up the street. It was five o'clock now. Stores and offices were closing and there were a lot of people going home from work.

'Look at 'em,' Al said. 'Look at the damn fools. Do we want to get like that? Why the hell don't they get away?'

'Where would they go?'

We crossed to the other side and waited on the corner for the signal to change.

'Looks like the fog's lifting,' I said.

Al looked up.

'You're crazy. It's worse.'

Halfway up the block we stopped at a movie theatre and looked thoughtfully at the posters. We didn't know what to do. To tell the truth we were tired, although we hadn't walked far. Al jingled some loose coins in his pocket.

'Feel like going in?' he said finally.

'It's O.K. by me. The picture can't be as bad as it looks out here.'

I didn't really give a damn whether we went in or not and I knew he didn't either. But there was nothing else to do except go back to the room or call up Peggy and her girl friend. My legs felt tired, and my head ached.

We got seats near the middle. The show was lousy. One picture was about a rich playboy and a big city; the other was about a newspaper reporter and a big city. We couldn't seem to sit still. After the first picture we wanted to leave, but somehow we didn't. The people around us kept giving us dirty looks.

When the news reel came on we got up and walked swiftly up the aisle. We stopped in the lobby to light cigarettes.

'We ought to ask for our money back,' said Al.

'They don't make good pictures any more.'

'They make them just for money. That's all the lousy bastards think of — not beauty.'

We stepped out. Then we stopped. We looked at the sky and we couldn't believe it. The sky was clear. Stars were shining, and the street lights blazed like suns, far on down the avenue.

'Jesus, Al!' I cried.

'We're crazy. You can't see good when you've been in a show that long.'

'No. It's clear. I can see the stars.'

'We can't see good,' he insisted. He shook his head, like a groggy boxer.

We began walking as fast as we could. Al stared intently ahead. His arms and legs swung like pistons. As soon as we reached the boat dock we could see the ship as plain as day. She was silhouetted in a faint outline of fog. A string of burning lights encircled her; she was glowing like an opalescent jewel.

'Let's hurry up,' I said. 'We'll get a water taxi.'

'We'll go down to the float.'

'We haven't got time.'

'Let's go down to the float first.'

'Jesus Christ.'

There was a large motor boat there, put-putting, half-filled with passengers in evening dress shouting and laughing and very drunk. The name *Daisy* was painted in bright new letters on the stern of the boat. Inside a square, uncovered booth, above the float, a fat, red-faced man was shouting through a megaphone. I could feel my heart beating. We caught some of his words: 'All aboard. All aboard. Dining . . . Dancing . . . The Joy Boat.'

'What boat's he talking about?' I said.

'Shut up, Goddammit.'

A man in evening dress lurched drunkenly down the gangway, hanging onto a washed-out looking blonde, and Al grabbed his arm.

'Where's that boat going?' he shouted in his ear.

'What's shat?'

'I said, where's that boat going?'

'Oh.' The man lurched backward, hiccoughing. 'You mean *that* boat?'

'Yes,' Al yelled. 'That boat.'

'Out to shee.' He waved his hand in a great semicircle. "'Way, 'way, 'way out to shee.'

Al dropped his arm and walked slowly away.

'Come on,' I said. 'Let's get going.'

'Maybe we ought to get a rowboat.'

'It's too cold now.'

'I guess you're right.'

He seemed suddenly like an old man.

We moved up the gangway and started toward our hotel. We heard the little fat man say: 'There she goes! There she goes! The *Daisy*. *Isn't* she a daisy, though! All aboard folks for the next trip to the Joy Boat. The newest and finest pleasure palace on the seas. No-O-O-o-o, you won't get wet.'

We looked back at the ship just once. The fog had nearly vanished now, but a few soft tendrils of gray mist remained, curled around her masts. Her lights shone with a strange and startling brilliance against the deep sky. I thought I could hear faint strains of music, a jazz number by a dance orchestra, but I wasn't sure. Our ship was pretty far out. I didn't know whether music could reach us from there or not.

When we got on the streetcar Al kept looking out of the window. There was still nothing to see: only those swift passing lights we had seen so many times.

'They weren't going out to our ship,' I heard him say finally.

'There must have been another boat there. We didn't look very close.'

'That's right.'

We both stared out of the window, trying to see something, but it was very dark.

'We'll go out with the girls next Saturday,' he said. 'There ought to be a dance or a good show.'

'They're nice girls.'

'Yeah, next Saturday will be all right.'

His voice sounded very tired.

The red car was picking up speed now. The street lights, passing by outside, began to blur.

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(From *Harper's Bazaar*, New York)

## IT HAD TO BE DONE<sup>x</sup>

BY MORLEY CALLAGHAN

**O**N THE drive out to the country that night to get the suits Chris had left at Mrs. Mumford's place, he kept telling Catherine she shouldn't have come. He was only going because he needed the suits. It didn't matter whether or not Mrs. Mumford only wanted him to be wearing something she had once bought for him. 'She knows I'm going to marry you,' he said.

'That's why I should meet her. Then maybe she'll believe it,' Catherine said. 'You're not ashamed of me.'

They were crossing the Delaware and driving through the soft rolling hills, and it seemed to Catherine that they never would be able to stop talking about Mrs. Mumford. He had met Mrs. Mumford five years ago when he was broke and wanted to be an architect, and she was rich and believed in his talent. She had so much enthusiasm he had thought he might be in love with her, even if she was five years older. She got him one job, then another, then had him quit the jobs and go to Europe with her to study. There never was a chance for him to worry about anything. But when he woke up and found she wanted to marry him and had

taken charge of his life, he hated himself for getting into it and left her. But she kept track of him and still kept trying to look after him. When she heard he was with Catherine she wrote him that maybe a girl like Catherine whom he had met at a dance and who worked in a department store would be good for him for a while. Then she asked him why he didn't come out and get the suits he had left at her place: she said she knew he needed them.

They had turned off the highway and were going up the side road past the little lighted store, and then Chris stopped the car. 'Here we are,' he said.

'I'll go up with you, Chris.'

'I know,' he said, getting out of the car. 'But it can't do any good, see. I'll only be gone twenty minutes.'

'But she'll wonder why you didn't bring me.'

'She'd certainly be surprised if I did,' he said, pulling his bag out of the back seat.

'That's just it,' she said eagerly. 'She's sure you wouldn't, no matter how often you write her that we love each other.'

'Look, honey,' he said, patting her arm. 'I don't want to make a visit out of this. I want to get out quick, isn't that right? I'll only be gone twenty minutes.' Then he kissed her and went on up the slope, swinging the bag, and his shadow got longer in the moonlight and broke over the car.

When he was out of sight she got out of the car and stood in the road looking around nervously. She had her hands deep in the pockets of her belted coat, and she pulled off her little blue hat and shook her long bobbed fair hair. She was twenty-one, fifteen years younger than Mrs. Mumford, and as she stood looking back at the light in the little store and then at the way the moonlight touched the stone fences as they curved up over the meadowland on Mrs. Mumford's property, she felt like a timid child. She was thinking that as soon as Chris opened the door

Mrs. Mumford would say, 'Why, darling, where's your girl?' and no matter what excuses he made she would know that he was ashamed to bring her.

In spite of herself she started to go up the road after Chris, but when she got to the little rippling stone-banked creek she grew afraid. She could go no further. Staring at the big white house and the lighted windows and the dark high hill behind it, she sat down weakly in the grass. When a cowbell tinkled in some near-by pastureland and she heard the swishing sound of the cow moving in the grass and then settling down again by a fence, she felt suddenly lost in a country that belonged to a rich woman, a country where Chris had lived and that was so beautiful and peaceful that surely as he walked up the road he would be remembering how he had wanted to hear all these little sounds again. Maybe he was remembering and hearing these sounds every time Mrs. Mumford wrote him offering to loan him money and giving him advice about little things and wishing him great happiness like a very noble woman.

'Oh, Chris, we've had such good times. You've said you felt free for the first time in your life,' she was whispering to herself, looking up at the house. He had got a job in an architect's office. He seemed to feel like a kid with her. He said he wanted to work and make something out of himself. He said that she would never understand what it was to have someone own your life and smother you and never give you a chance to be yourself. She was trying hard to remember these things, but if he was ashamed of her, then nothing she had given him was good. While he felt that he did not want Mrs. Mumford to see her, he could never really belong to her.

As she got up and began to go slowly toward the house she was frightened. She felt she had to do it, and the loud beating of her heart could not stop her. At the door she faltered, then she rapped weakly. 'I was waiting,' she said to the maid. 'Mrs.

Mumford will know me.' Then she went into the old white colonial living-room, trying to smile and walk lazily.

Chris and Mrs. Mumford were standing together at the long pine table. The open bag was on the table and Chris was packing his suits in it. As Catherine came in they both turned, startled. Mrs. Mumford was a large, handsome woman with jet-black hair drawn back tight from her bold and vivid face, and the white part in her hair was shining in the light. If Chris had only smiled naturally, or come to her to welcome her, she would have felt immense relief, but his face reddened as Mrs. Mumford stared at Catherine, then turned, wondering, to him.

'It got chilly outside,' Catherine said. 'I thought I might as well come in.'

'You're Catherine, aren't you?' Mrs. Mumford asked.

'Yes.'

'Why, Chris,' she said. 'You said you came alone.'

'I didn't want to stay more than a minute,' he explained awkwardly. 'It wasn't like a visit, see. I mean, I knew you'd want us to stay.' But out of the corner of his eye he glanced at Catherine savagely and she felt panicky.

'Please sit down,' Mrs. Mumford said, and she smiled and nodded sympathetically, and it was terrible for both of them because she made them feel that she understood their embarrassment and only wanted to help them. So Catherine sat down by herself with her toes close together. After that one appraising glance, Mrs. Mumford turned away and tried to help Chris with the straps on the bag. His hands were pawing at the lock. His head was down and his ears were red as he fumbled with it. 'If only you both had come for the evening we could have had such a lovely chat,' Mrs. Mumford was saying. It seemed to Catherine, praying that Chris hurry, that the woman was mocking her. Beneath Mrs. Mumford's simple calmness she felt a vast assurance and aggressiveness that terrified her. If Mrs. Mumford

had ordered her suddenly to take a walk around the house, she felt she would get up meekly and do it. She began to long to find something within herself that Mrs. Mumford would see she could never touch.

Chris was still having trouble getting the edges of the bag together, and as he bent over the bag, muttering, Mrs. Mumford bent over, too, to help him. Their heads were close together. 'What's the trouble?' she asked. 'Let me try.'

She jammed the edges together suddenly when Chris had his finger against the edge of the metal lock. 'Ouch. Damn it, my finger!' he said.

'Why, it's your nail,' she said. 'Oh, dear. That's terrible. Let me see it.' She took his hand and lifted it close to her face. 'Why, it's bleeding.'

'It's nothing. It doesn't hurt at all,' he said uneasily.

'It'll turn black. I'll get some ointment,' she said. 'Maybe I should put a piece of cloth around it.' And suddenly she seemed to enfold him. Her face lit up with an energetic warmth. She seemed to be ministering to someone she possessed. It was only a little thing, but Catherine stood up, frightened. It seemed to her that if she let Mrs. Mumford do one thing more for Chris he could never really belong to her.

'Why don't you leave him alone?' she whispered.

'Why, his finger's hurt,' Mrs. Mumford said, startled.

'That isn't it,' Catherine said breathlessly as she took a step toward Mrs. Mumford.

'Catherine, please —' Chris begged her.

'It's just a little thing, I know,' Catherine went on doggedly.

'What's the matter with her, Chris?' Mrs. Mumford asked.

'This is the matter,' Catherine blurted out, white-faced. 'Somebody's got to tell you. Why don't you leave him alone? Leave him alone. You don't own people. Stop trying to boss him around.'

But the contempt she saw in Mrs. Mumford's eyes suddenly silenced her. She turned helplessly to Chris.

'I'm sorry,' he was saying to Mrs. Mumford. 'I didn't want this to happen.'

'I understand, Chris,' she said calmly.

But she kept looking at Catherine. Her long appraising look made Catherine feel she had to hurt her. 'Come on, Chris,' she said. 'Come on, let's go. The lady doesn't think much of me.'

Then her heart was pounding wildly and she didn't care what she did. And she swung her coat back and put her hand on her hip, showing the fine curve of her breast and her slimness and her young body. As she moved she swaggered a little, swaying her hips, her eyes mocking Mrs. Mumford and seeming to say, 'Go on, take a look at me. You haven't got everything.'

But Mrs. Mumford only turned to Chris, trying to get him to look at her. He was staring at Catherine, pain and surprise in his eyes. Then the shame and humiliation Catherine had been dreading ever since she came there flooded through her. She looked scared.

'Don't you think you made a mistake?' Mrs. Mumford said, turning to Chris.

'The mistake I made was in coming here,' he shouted at her. And he swung away from her and grabbed the handle of the open bag and jerked it off the table. It flopped open and the suits spilled out on the floor. Then he and Mrs. Mumford looked down at the suits. 'She's right,' he said to her. 'And you remember it.'

Hoisting the empty bag under his arm he grabbed Catherine by the shoulder and pushed her toward the door, and he kept pulling her out and down the path of light from the open door.

'I'm sorry, Chris. I'm sorry,' she began to sob.

'Why did you have to come in?' he shouted.

'I acted like a cheap little chippie,' she wept. 'I didn't want to. I guess I had to.'

'I told you to stay out and you didn't,' he said. He was rushing her down the road and she could hardly keep up to him. 'Maybe you should stay with her. Maybe she's right. You shouldn't be with me,' she said. Her face kept turning to him, pleading, apologetic and ashamed. 'That's it.' Without stopping, he turned, stricken, as if scared she was going to deny him suddenly everything that had built his life up. His hand tightened on her arm. She felt a furtive leap of joy; they were going down the road faster, and he seemed to be holding her to him tighter than ever before.

## FRÈRE JACQUES<sup>1</sup>

BY JOHN CHEEVER

**F**IVE minutes before she drove into the yard behind the camp, he could hear the car coming down the dirt road.

Its sound was hard to distinguish from the sound of the wind that had come up that day at dark, brushing through the tops of the pines. Then the headlights swept the room like the drunken light of a hurricane lamp, and he heard the motor idle and stall. She whistled to him. Then she called to him through the screen door:

‘Open the door, please, Alex. I’m loaded down with bundles and Héloïse is cutting up.’

Her voice sounded tired. He opened the door and she came into the room. In the crook of one arm she was carrying a large bundle of fresh laundry, holding it against her breast as if it were a child. In the other arm she had a lot of small packages.

‘Back so soon?’ he said. He was Russian and he spoke with a slight accent. ‘It didn’t take you long. Did you get everything?’

‘Kiss me,’ she said.

He kissed her.

‘Did you get everything?’ he asked again.

‘Yes,’ she said. ‘The *Times*, nails, the padlock, the laundry.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by The Atlantic Monthly Company.

The post office was closed, but I dropped our forwarding address in the mailbox. Oh, Alex, this business of moving gets me down. Look at my hands.' She held up her left hand to show him. It was trembling.

'Yes,' he said, 'I know. It makes me tired, too.'

'It's not that I've done anything,' she said. 'It's just the business of making the break. And this bloody weather. The way that wind blows up.'

'Yes, I know,' he said.

She handed him the *Times* and laid down all of the parcels but the laundry bundle. She still held that affectionately in the crook of her arm. She was tired and he noticed it. Her face was pale and slightly drawn, and her voice was tired. Her yellow hair was trussed up simply at the crown of her head, and it made her look younger than her twenty-two years and accentuated the tiredness and restlessness of her features. He lit a lamp and sat down to read the paper. He was interested in the Spanish trouble and he was anxious to find who was holding Madrid.

'Mrs. Wiley said she was sorry to see us go,' she said. 'She hasn't swindled anyone on a laundry bill the way she swindled us for years. And I said good-bye to the butcher and the garage man for you. It's surprising how many people you can get to know in two weeks. And I bought an ice cream for Héloïse.'

'You're telling me,' he said, without looking up from the paper. 'It's all over her face. Chocolate?'

'Yes,' she said, 'chocolate. If you have a handkerchief I'll wipe it off.'

He reached into his pocket and took out a large, clean handkerchief. He always had clean handkerchiefs. She took the handkerchief and daubed at the face of the laundry bundle with it as if she were wiping the ice cream from a child's mouth. The joke of the laundry bundle was an old one. Every bundle of salt, sugar, corn meal, flour, or laundry that she had carried, during

the two years they had lived together, she had called Héloïse, and they had talked lightly and facetiously over it as if it were their child. She was very young and this strained talk was some of the tenderest that had gone between them. But he was ten years older than she and he often tired of it. He was tired of it on that evening, and it was a strain for him to keep it up.

‘Any better?’ she asked, holding up the bundle for him to see.

‘Much better,’ he said. ‘Did honey like the ice cream?’

‘Tell Daddy how good the ice cream was,’ she said, jogging the bundle tenderly on her arm.

‘Has the little girl lost her tongue?’ he said. He was bored and irritated by it, but he kept it up for her sake.

‘Oh, well,’ she said, ‘she’s as tired as we, and we can’t expect her to talk all the time. I do wish we could bring her up in the country, Alex. She’d be a brighter baby.’

‘Money,’ he said.

‘Yes, darling,’ she said, ‘I know. Back to Bank Street for you, Héloïse.’

He went back to his paper and she stood at the open door, looking out onto the lake. The oppressive clouds were filling in with dark, like sailcloth, and the lake was beginning to chop under a northeast wind. The clouds and the wind and the dark were all bearing up from the narrows, and in the gray light the lake seemed to have something as hostile and defenseless about it as the seaboard.

‘There’s nothing more to do?’ she asked.

‘No,’ he said. Her persistence in talking while he tried to read irritated him. ‘We can leave the keys here. We ought to get to bed soon. I want to start early in the morning. I’d like to get back to the city before dark.’

‘That outboard sounds like a hornet,’ she said.

The single sound above the chopping of the waves was the droning of an outboard, way up beyond Basin Bay.

'What did you say about hornets?'

'That outboard,' she said; 'it sounds like a hornet.'

'Oh,' he said.

'Want to go swimming?' she said. She stood with her back to him, looking out over the lake. She was still holding the laundry bundle.

'It's too cold,' he said.

'No, Alex, it's not too cold. And it's our last chance to go swimming until next summer. And when you come out the air seems warmer.'

'You know what the doctor said.'

'To hell with the doctor.'

'Well, go swimming if you want. You'll have to go alone.'

'I don't want to go swimming alone,' she said quietly.

'Why don't you sit down and enjoy yourself?' he said. 'It's your last chance.'

'I am enjoying myself,' she said. 'Héloïse and I are having the time of our lives, aren't we, Héloïse? Just a couple of bugs in a rug. See the gull?'

'Where?' he said, putting down his paper again.

'Right over there.'

'Oh, yes.'

A gray gull, a shade lighter than the overcast sky, rode above the water, hunting.

'I didn't know gulls liked fresh water,' she said.

'They come down the St. Lawrence,' he said, 'and then down Champlain.'

'I'll bet they get homesick for the ocean,' she said.

For a long time neither of them spoke. He thought she had left the room, but when he looked up she was still standing there. The room had grown dark, but her white *espadrilles* and her dress seemed to hold the light. He could still see them distinctly.

'Can we have a fire, Alex?' she said.

'It's not cold enough.'

'Oh, I don't want it for that. It's just that it would be a nice evening to have a fire. This is the kind of weather to have fires. It makes me feel lonely — the noise of that wind.'

'Anyhow, there isn't any wood,' he said. 'We burned it all last night.'

'Well, let's do something,' she said. 'Let's play double Canfield.'

'I'm too tired,' he said.

'You get tired easier than I.'

'I'm older than you.'

'Love me, Alex?'

'Sure, but I'm tired.'

'I don't know why I'm so restless,' she said. 'I hate moving and I hate autumn. When I was nine years old, Grandfather took me up to Boston to buy some school clothes and we stayed at an old hotel and it smelled just like this camp. I had to get out of bed to go to the bathroom and I was terrified. I can still remember it.'

He wished she would stop talking.

'Well, Héloïse,' she said, patting the bundle, 'maybe some day we'll have money and we can have a house in the country. We'll live in the same place year in and year out and do all of those things that Mother remembers. Oh, living on Bank Street, honey, wouldn't give you the faintest idea of what a life can be — a life without Mrs. Weiner and Mrs. White and Mrs. Deutsch and Daddy's drinking companions ringing the doorbell all the time. Sometimes you think you've just dreamed it or imagined it, sweet, but it actually exists. The trucks don't take your sleep away. It's quiet at night. Daddy can hunt and Mummy can have a horse. 'Bye-low, baby bunting,' she sang, cradling the bundle, 'Daddy's gone a-hunting, to get himself a rabbit skin, to wrap his baby bunting in.'

She hesitated and bent over the bundle. She was very good at mimicry, and the angle of her arms and shoulders and the tone of her voice were absorbed and affectionate.

'Isn't that sweet?' she whispered. 'She's fallen asleep. The poor little tyke is tired. She's such a good egg, Alex. Here we've dragged her off to the country and now we're dragging her back to the city, and not one word of complaint. Some babies would squall; but not Héloïse. She looks a lot like you when she's asleep. Something about the eyes. Don't you think?'

'Yes,' he said. He tried to show in the tone of one word how tired he was of her talk.

'We'll have to have her photographed,' she went on. She spoke in a low voice, as if she were afraid she would wake the bundle. 'We must keep a record of her golden months. I'll get in Honneneg-Hunné. Both of our mothers were Boston women.'

'Please,' he said, 'I'm trying to read.'

'All right,' she said.

He was sorry to have spoken shortly and he looked over to where she was standing. He thought he heard her cough.

'That wind is cold, darling,' he said. 'You'd better put a sweater on.'

She didn't answer him. Then he saw that she was not coughing, but that she was crying. She was sobbing like a runner who is tired and short of breath.

'Now what's the matter?' he asked.

'Nothing much,' she said quietly. 'I want a child.'

'But why bring that up now? You know we can't afford one.'

'Yes, I know. But I want one, I want one, I want one!' she cried hotly, turning to him. Her face was shining with tears. 'I'm sick of this, Alex; I'm sick to my heart of this.'

'But why do you get yourself excited about it? You know there's nothing we can do now.'

'Or ever.'

‘But why do you get yourself excited by it?’

‘There are some things we could do.’

‘What?’

‘You might marry me.’

‘What difference would that make?’

‘A great difference for me,’ she said. ‘A human difference.’

‘Don’t get sentimental.’

‘Mother is sentimental, Héloïse,’ she said. ‘Comfort your sentimental mother. Reassure her. She feels as if she were falling.’

‘Please,’ he said tiredly, ‘don’t begin that.’

He put his hand on her shoulder, but she twisted quickly out of his reach.

‘Father doesn’t understand us at all,’ she said. She had stopped sobbing then and she was speaking to the bundle with great confidence.

‘Father doesn’t understand us at all,’ she repeated, ‘not at all. *Mais ça ne fait rien, chérie. Pas du tout, pas du tout.* “Frère Jacques, Frère Jacques,”’ she crooned.

‘Stop it,’ he pleaded, ‘please.’

“*Dormez-vous? Dormez-vous? Sonnez les matines, sonnez les matines.*”

He was frightened, then, for if they had been frankly separating in a cold depot, on a rainy pier, in the doorway of a restaurant, if she had been screaming and crying and drumming her heels on the floor, her words couldn’t have held more finality and estrangement than the simple, persistent words of that song.

## INDIAN ON THE ROAD<sup>1</sup>

BY GEAN CLARK

**E**VEN now, when automobiles purr up and over and always southward toward Grand and Zion's Canyons and toward California beyond, the road is lost in the sagebrush. The ranges of small mountains parallel it on both sides and the sage runs with it without variation, a river of gray-green brush. On the rounded mountains are scattered dwarf cedars, and among them abrupt boulders stand out. The green of the sage and the trees makes an eternity of day and hour, changeless and desolate.

How wearisome, then, it must have seemed to Riley Tebbs, that February day in the middle sixties, to ride in his rough hand-hewn wagon down the ruts of this same meager road. The sky was blurred with coming snow, and nothing moved in that great country except the horses and the wagon. The heads of the animals swung monotonously sideward and upward, matching the dull rhythm of their feet on the hard red-colored earth. No jack rabbit fled across the road; no hawk made its curved inspection. Only the horses, with their monotonous clo-up clop, clo-up clop, moved, pulling the wagonload of machinery.

Repetitiously, too, the thoughts of the man ran out toward the

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1939, by Edward J. O'Brien.

end of the road and returned, ran out and returned. This journey had been too long for him to have made alone, for he dwelt on forgotten things and he could not shake them. He tried to fix his mind upon wives — upon children — to feel the feathered comfort of a bed and to anticipate a breakfast of steamed biscuits covered by milk gravy made from tenderloin — but like an unvaried Indian song, the voice of Sari came to him:

‘I will marry you, Father Riley, if you will take another Indian woman. I will not be alone among your wives.’

And in order that Sari should not be alone, he had told Fern to prepare herself, also, for the Temple marriage.

Sari had been quick and mobile. Her gaiety had made her loved among his children and by his wives. In earlier days, when he had adopted the Indian sisters, Sari and Fern, he had been too busy to notice them except to see that they were like the others in his household, industrious and happy. And then he had come home after a long absence and he saw Sari grown to womanhood. Indian women were never beautiful to Riley, but Sari was. Her lithe movements and her sensitive response to his words made him watch her more than he realized. He wanted to keep her in his sight always. He had not kept her. How strange was the way he had lost her! He tried to get away from his memory, and he forced his thoughts to follow the road.

There would be a night and a day of steady going before the bright yellow cliffs would show on the left, and another day before the great red mountains of Pine Valley thrust their bold grandeur into that flowing sagebrush. And then the next day would bring the quick descent into the warm St. George Valley, where snow had not been known to fall, and where the red earth remained parched and angry. There was not irrigation water enough in the Rio Virgin to transform this ‘Dixie’ country into the luxuriant paradise the land promised. Cotton had been grown and mul-

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berry trees planted for experimentation, but can much be done to cotton or to silk in a land without water?

Still, Riley was bringing more machinery from Salt Lake City for the new cotton mill. Cotton goods were needed in this Pioneer isolation, and he saw to it that the need was fulfilled. The Civil War in the States, coupled with the persecution of long standing from the Government, had made the Utah Territory self-sufficient.

This man, a Mormon leatherstocking, was the most distinguished Indian mediator in the Grand Canyon country. And that is a crown to claim for any man. When he sat with the fiery Navajoes in their council tepees, his powerful shoulders and his head, noble in shape, dominated the hut. His eyes were steady and his expression matched those of the Indians, even when the council lasted from sundown until the following sundown. And when he spoke his words were believed, just as the words of the prophets of Israel were believed because of their simplicity and sincerity. It was when he stood that he lost some dignity, for the shanks of his legs were short for a man.

Riley was also a highly respected Brother in the St. George community, and his household of four wives and seventeen children (not including the two Santa Clara Indian girls) was a prosperous one. And although he was infrequently home, his cattle grew in numbers in the Pine Valley range, and his lands and vineyards were fertile and he owned good water titles. His sons were taught to have faith in the Lord and to be industrious. His daughters cooked and wove cloth and dried and preserved fruits. They took care of the needy, and the sick were often healed by their medicines. The adopted Indian girls, too, had been taught pioneering skills. Once, years ago, a poor Sister in the community had severe abdominal pains. And Sari, as bright-colored and as shifting in mood as the lights on the Grand Canyon wall, took a fat hen and with a sharp knife opened it up, and

removing the hot entrails lifted them onto the swollen abdomen of the Sister. The sick woman was healed almost immediately. It was by such works that the Tebbs family was respected in the Church and in the town. But that was long ago.

Tebbs had spent the past three years among the Hopis in Arizona, learning their ways and pacifying them. This had given him time to come amongst them with the light of the Gospel as well. And Tichinici, the Medicine Woman, and Pottoonna, the Councilman, had forded the Colorado at the Crossing of the Fathers, a thing not done by any Hopi for two hundred years, accompanying Riley Tebbs on his return home. They had gone into Salt Lake City with him, to talk with the Great White Chief, Brigham Young.

And now he returned without them, for they were still seeing the wonders of the white man's civilization, and could not marvel enough at its ease and comfort and at the power of the venerable Brigham.

As Tebbs drove, the red road slipping away beneath the wagon, he held the lines slack in his hands, and tried to think of his coming expedition among the Navajoes and of the bounty of the Lord, and tried to keep out of his mind the memory of these things he had been thinking, now that time was no account and the day and the road were endless.

But as the moments widened and narrowed and passed by, his mind went back: Perhaps it might have happened anyway. The Santa Clara Indians were treacherous. The Indians always came to him in disputes of any kind. He recalled the incident exactly.

A young girl had been claimed in marriage by two Santa Clara Indians. Each brave had taken one of her arms to see who was to win her in a tug of strength. When it became evident that the girl's arms were being pulled from their sockets, a sympathetic Indian had come for Riley. He had gone at once, had ridden up and taken her away from them. He smiled grimly when he

remembered that he had nearly had to marry her himself. For so was the custom. But he had given her to the man she favored, and had gained an enemy of the other suitor. That had been the beginning of his trouble with the Santa Claras. And that was why he had married Fern.

He remembered the autumn day, long after, that a messenger had come to his home on a lathered horse from a settlement nearby, of twenty families. The messenger brought news that the Santa Clara Indians were painting themselves in preparation to make war upon his settlement. Their revengeful blood had been stirred by the warrior whom Riley had slighted, that day, when he had interfered with the contest over the bride. The Indians knew that the settlers' storehouse was full of their harvest and that they had a large herd of stock. There were rumors, too, that the Indians would let out the dam of the reservoir and wash the St. George settlement away. The messenger had been filled with the fear of a massacre.

And then it had come to Riley. The solution to the problem of the Clara Indians might be found if he were to marry one of their women, and thus form an alliance of blood between the white and the red men. And the long warfare with this tribe would cease. It seemed to him the only course. But he was thinking of Sari.

And so he had called his adopted daughter, Sari, to him. And when she came to him, her face vivid with expectancy — for Father Riley seldom called his children to him formally — he knew his policy was right.

‘Yes, Father Riley?’ she had said, looking down at him and smiling at him as he sat in his big chair before the window that overlooked his acres. He remembered that he had thought at that moment that perhaps she was too young. But he had nevertheless asked her to marry him. It had been his duty. He had reared her as his daughter and had taught her reverence and

respect for him; therefore her answer to his proposal had come unexpectedly.

She had said: 'I will marry you, Father Riley, if you will marry another Indian woman. I will not be alone among your wives.'

And so he had decided to marry both sisters, Fern as well as Sari. He had not asked dull, stolid Fern — he had told her, and she had complied. He thus made his truce with their people and prepared to have the marriage performed in the new St. George Temple that stood like a white candle in that red country.

Riley again interrupted his thoughts, impatiently shaking himself.

'What's done is done,' he said. 'There is no place in the Lord's plan for regret.'

And he stood up in the wagon to rest, for the springless wooden seat was harder than a saddle to sit upon. The horses pricked their ears and started into a dog-trot. The air had become sharp with the promise of snow. By standing, Riley could see farther into the distance, but the widened scene did not change. He stood for fifteen or twenty minutes, and then, narrowing his eyes, he saw a dark object far in the distance, moving. This excited him, for such a moving object might be anything and he was alone in the immensity of the sage.

If it turned out to be an animal — a coyote — a deer — a brown bear — a wolf — he would see its tracks in the dust. If it were an Indian there might be others. The Santa Clara Indians still held their grudge. How many years...? Eleven years since Sari had gone and ten since Fern had left. He put this thought away. The figure might be that of another traveler. It was possible that a lone man might be going south, though it was not usual. The horses lessened the distance, and it occurred to Riley that it might be one of the Three Nephites, or other supernatural beings, come to test his faith and his testimony, and his life.

His own mother in Nauvoo, Illinois, had been on her death bed and their family and neighbors had given up all hope when she had seen the Nephites. Elders had administered to her, and still she grew worse. Then as the sun went down and the evening spread over the land and the river, three figures appeared in her room. They had not opened the door. They had appeared. They walked silently toward her bed and their white garments rippled with an unfelt breeze. The bed was placed with one side against the wall, but they had walked right around the foot of the bed and had stood between it and the wall. Their faces shone and their voices were gentle and full of music. And they had said to her:

‘Do you believe in the Holy Ghost?’

And she, being too weak to speak, had nodded, tears running down her cheeks.

‘Then,’ they had all spoken as one glorious voice, ‘arise and be whole and go about your household. You will live to rear your family in the tops of the mountains in the land of Zion and to know the blessings of the Lord.’

Then they had walked over to the door and had opened it. They had gone out of the house and down to the corner and there they had disappeared. And his mother had risen from her bed whole.

Riley had heard of many such experiences and knew them to be true. And in moments such as this he hungered for such a testimony as his mother had had. His lack of religious experience made him doubt somewhat his spiritual qualifications. Perhaps he had lived too much in the saddle among rough men and treasonable savages. He had used a gun as well as a prayer for his purposes.

The figure was larger now and Riley strained his eyes and decided that it was a being. And his heart suffocated him. Perhaps he might be the instrument of revelation. This feeling was accompanied by some misgiving, for Tebbs was an honest man.

and knew that in the presence of Divinity acts hidden from the eyes of man are startlingly clear.

The wagon gained on the figure and Riley made out at last what it was. It was a woman, straining under a burden. His heart eased and his excitement left him. He saw that the woman had stopped and was waiting for the wagon to approach.

The wind that blew through the sagebrush blew the woman's orange and red blanket. She was an Indian, and he could see now that though she seemed old her burden was a baby hanging in a papoose-board from her forehead. As the horses came abreast of her, she stepped out into the brush, for the road was narrow.

Riley called, 'Whoa!' to his horses. He waited.

She waited too. Then he spoke in her dialect, for apparently she was a Clara Indian, saying:

'Where are you going? Why are you walking along the road with your baby?'

Still she came no nearer. The baby was whimpering.

'Come here,' he said, but made no move to get down from the wagon. 'Will you ride with me?'

The baby's crying was made louder by the silence. But soon the woman came to the wagon, and without hesitation placed her moccasin upon the hub of the wheel and climbed into the wagon, seating herself heavily beside Riley.

He did not watch her but kept his eyes on the road. Some familiar motion of the woman annoyed his memory. But he put the annoyance aside and chucked to his team. And the two rode on along the road. The motion of the wagon distracted the baby's attention and it stopped its fretting.

The trickle of road wound on before them, and the quiet and loneliness of the land, which had lain without heaviness on the man alone, became an unendurable weight upon the man and woman riding together.

Always alert to the pressure of influences about him, he felt a

curious resistance on the part of the woman and decided not to wait for her to speak.

Again he addressed her in her own tongue. 'The little one needs medicine?'

She answered in good English, 'She is well.'

He was entirely surprised. The Clara Indians were for the most part a bad lot and not willing to learn to understand the white man's words, let alone speak them. He saw that despite her heaviness she looked ill and that her clothes were worn and dirty. She was perhaps thirty-five years of age. Indian women grew old early. Their life was hard, and childbearing killed many of them. He quieted his doubts. Perhaps she had been taken by a white family up north before she married.

Snowflakes began to fall like fluffs of cotton seed that fly from cottonwood trees. They came delicately down upon the cheeks and lips of the two. Soon they would come faster and without delicacy.

'Are you going to Kanarra?' Riley tried again. 'It is far along the road.'

'No,' she said.

'Where then?'

'To St. George.' She fixed her eyes on the man's face, reading his surprise.

'It is still winter,' he said incredulously, 'and the journey is too great for anyone to make on foot.'

She did not reply.

'You have your papoose and no provisions.'

She said stolidly, watching him, 'I have been waiting for your wagon, Father Riley.'

Many Indians called him Father Riley because of his position among them. And many knew him whom he did not know, since he was familiar to most Indian tribes. But her intonation of his name was as well known somehow to him as the brand on the hips of his cattle.

It was his turn now to be wary. 'How long have you traveled?'

'I have not traveled yet. I have been waiting for you since I learned that you were taking the Hopi Medicine Woman and the Councilman to see President Young.'

'Where have you waited?'

She indicated, with her eyes, the low mountains to the east.

The horses were shaking their heads to keep the heavy flakes from clinging to their long forelocks.

'How did you know I was coming today?' His suspicion grew.

She said, 'Father Riley always takes seventeen days when he goes to Salt Lake.'

He jerked the reins fiercely and they slapped the backs of the horses, making the pair brisken their pace. She was Fern! This woman was the Indian girl whom he had not seen since she had run away from him ten years before. She had been sixteen then. He remembered her with bitterness. Stolid, passive, and squat as the blackened bricks in his great stone fireplace. Unlike Sari, from her early childhood when he had first taken the two orphan girls to rear, she had been dull and wooden.

The baby near him began to cry again. Fern took it from her back and held it in the papoose-board on her lap and rocked back and forth on the hard wooden seat.

She glanced anxiously at the stern man. 'She will not cry long,' she said.

'Where is its father?' He was even more stern.

The Indian woman's face became more guarded. She shook her head.

He looked at her with fierce indignation and asked harshly, 'How many children have you?'

'Four.'

'Where are they?'

'They did not live long. We do not live as you do, and our babies sicken and die.' She had unlaced the child and was holding it close to her, warming it. 'Food is not easy to get.'

The snow was finer now and wet. The day was growing dark. Sagebrush gave way only to more sagebrush within the curtained range of sight.

He forgot the woman and righteous resentment for a time, for, without reason, fragments of a prayer offered by Brother Willards for him at the farewell meeting held in his honor in the church before he left on his Hopi mission came to him clearly:

'... May he be endowed with thy Spirit... may thine angels visit and sustain him, and ministering spirits from thy presence attend him in all his ways. Guard him, O Lord, from malicious design... turn aside every shaft that is aimed for his injury; fit and prepare him with every necessary qualification to lead and guide thy Indian people, the Lamanites.... May the rich blessings of heaven and earth be poured upon his household; bless his habitation and all therein — his flocks and his herds; the ground that he cultivates, his fields, his gardens, and his vineyards; bless him in basket and in store, and in all that pertains unto him. And may he bring with his great love the red-skinned brother into the fold....'

And he had brought the friendly Hopis into the fold. The Lord had guided his hand and given him judgment and had showered his blessings upon him.

The snow was falling steadily now, and it enclosed the two against the sage. The horses kept to the road with difficulty. This snow would be worth riches later, for it would pile up in the mountains and later feed the Rio Virgin. The backs of the man and woman were protected from the storm by the machinery in the wagon, which was piled high. But their heads and shoulders and legs in front were exposed to it. A light covering had fallen on them. She moved closer to him for protection.

As Tebbs felt this woman beside him, he saw her again as she had been as they drove home from the Temple after the marriage ceremony had been performed. Alien and unresponsive. He had married this woman whom he had not wanted. Through her he had lost Sari and the friendship and confidence of the Santa Clara Indians. For when the Temple Clerk had asked which was the elder of the two, for she was to be the first married, the girls had remembered that Fern was. And when Tebbs and Fern had returned from the ceremony, united in marriage for time and eternity, Sari had gone. She had taken off her Temple garments and had told the Temple workers:

‘I will be second wife to Father Riley’s white wives, but never a second wife to an Indian.’

They had not been able to stop her from going. He had immediately sent searchers to look for her, but they had found no trace of her, and if the Indians knew where she was they had no desire to tell him.

This humiliation, which had been his only humiliation in his Indian dealings, had burned long and deep within him. Fern had stood the brunt of it for four months and then had returned to her people. And the bond between the two races was broken. For she had disregarded the sacred ceremony of marriage.

The Indian woman watched Tebbs’s face and noticed the signs of anger that she had known. He said to her:

‘What do you want of me now?’

The woman hesitated.

‘Well?’ he demanded.

She answered stolidly, dully: ‘You are my husband. I am coming back to live with you among your wives.’

His surprise left him without speech or action. And again the old humiliation burned in him and Sari’s mocking came at him. He jerked the reins and pulled the team to a stop. And now the silence undistrubed by the wagon wheels or horses’ hoofs was

vaster than the sagebrush immensity had been. It stretched out and beyond and hung over the edges of the world.

Then the man broke it and sent it spinning. 'Get out,' he said. 'Get out of the wagon!'

She did not move, but stared unbelievingly at him.

'You heard me!' he shouted. 'Get out.'

She still did not move, but his eyes bored into hers and she made a futile resistance to the command in them. 'The papoose will die like the others . . .'

'Get out!'

She stood and, balancing the baby on her hip, climbed down from the wagon into the deepening snow.

He whipped his horses and the wagon went forward into the soft white storm that fell quietly, swiftly. Even the sage and the gray-green river disappeared.

## PASSING THROUGH<sup>1</sup>

BY ROBERT M. COATES

**I**T WAS one of those hotel rooms where the faucets of the washstands have springs in them, so that you can't leave the water running but have to hold the faucet turned on as long as you use it. The man noticed this at once, and he was tired enough to have the fact give him a feeling of annoyance; it had been so hot all day, and the roads had been so dusty, that the one thing he had wanted to do was to run a bowlful and leave the water running while he plunged his hands and face in it, as you would in a brook.

The washbasin was over in one corner, with a cheap mirror dangling above it and two towels on a rack beside it. The bedstead was of iron, twisted in old-fashioned curlicues and white-enamelled, and the only light was a single electric bulb, hung by its cord from the centre of the ceiling. There was no telephone in the room, he noticed, but then he hadn't expected there would be one in such a small country hotel. He'd have to find a telephone somewhere, though, he thought.

The boy who had taken him up to the room set the man's two suitcases down near the foot of the bed. 'Be stayin' here long, Mister?' he said.

'No,' the man said. He had a slow, heavy voice. 'Just passing through.' He was a short man, middle-aged, ruddy-skinned, with a round, patient face which just now looked dark with dust and weariness. When the boy had gone, he walked over to the bed and sat down on it, pulling one of the two suitcases between his legs as he did so. He had meant to get out his washcloth and pajamas, but before he had unfastened one strap buckle he stopped; he was too tired to bother just now.

It was a small town he was in, a small town in eastern Ohio, and he remembered the name from his road map — Grosvenor; and it was already getting on toward eleven o'clock, so the town must be settling down for the night. There were times when for moments on end, as he sat in the little, brightly lighted hotel room, he would hear no sound at all. Then he would hear in the street outside the soft, beating whir of a motor-car passing, or a voice or a pair of voices pronouncing unintelligible words; for a while he just sat there, listening to the silence as much as to the occasional sounds.

Then he heard a man's footsteps, or they sounded like a man's, coming down the corridor and halting, and a key turning in one of the room doors, and suddenly he remembered that it was late and he was hungry. He ran a bowlful of water, stripped off his coat and shirt, and washed himself. When he was in his undershirt, bending over the tiny basin, his arms and shoulders looked large but flabby, as if a once-muscular frame had gone fat, and the ruddy texture of his face could be seen to stop at the collar line; below that the flesh was soft and pale.

Having washed, he felt better, and he put on his shirt and coat again and went out, leaving the light burning but locking the door. There was a flight of stairs at the end of the corridor, leading down to the lobby, and here there was a hotel desk that was partly a cigar counter, with a thin, gray-haired man standing behind it who looked up casually and nodded to him as he passed.

In the easy chairs lined against the opposite wall there were a couple of men reading newspapers who did not look up at all. There was a telephone booth in a corner at the rear.

He went on out into the street. It was a wide cement thoroughfare, part of a through route, and the air that hung above it had a suggestion of heat and hurry that seemed to divorce it from the town. On his right, it dipped sharply downward. There were houses there, perhaps, but he could not see them; all he could see were a few street lights dotting the slope and beyond that nothing, only darkness and, probably, open country. That was the road west, the road he would go tomorrow, and he stood a moment looking down it. Then he turned and began walking in the other direction, where the town's centre lay. Here there was a row of stores, many of them with permanent awnings built out over the sidewalk and supported on iron stanchions, and in the dimness under these he could see a few men in shirtsleeves walking slowly and a car or two standing at the curb. All the stores on his side of the street were closed. When he saw the lighted windows of a lunchroom across the way, he crossed over to it and went in.

It had a counter down one side and tables along the other, and there were two young fellows in polo shirts sitting at the far end of the counter, talking to the waitress behind it. They all stopped talking and looked up at the man as he entered. He sat down at one of the tables and the girl came out from behind the counter to wait on him. She was a blonde, with regular though slightly heavy features, and she didn't look down at the man as she stood over him at the table; the two boys at the counter had gone back to their talk and she kept her head turned toward them, listening and smiling. The man ordered ham and eggs and coffee, and then, while he waited for the food to be served, he listened to them, too.

‘You did eighty!’ one of them was saying derisively.

‘Eighty-two,’ the other insisted.

'Musta been downhill where you done it, then.'

'Downhill nothin'. On the level it was. Flat level.'

'Flat level! Why, man, if that bus of yours ever even touched sixty, it'd bounce you right out of your seat.'

The girl had called the man's order back into the kitchen, and now she was arranging dishes on a tray. 'What makes you think Will's car won't do eighty, Eddie?' she said. She had a flat, rather nasal voice. 'What I hear, that car can step.'

'What you hear!' The boy she had called Eddie had a shock of black hair and a square, belligerent face, and he grinned at her mockingly as he spoke. 'You know enough about that car your own self, I bet.' The girl didn't reply, but she folded her arms and leaned back against the wall behind the counter, looking at him provocatively. 'Only what you know is how it parks, not how it travels,' he went on. Then he laughed and the girl made a little dive at him as if to slap him, but he seized her hand instead and for a moment they tussled, both laughing. Watching them, the man found himself smiling too.

But as soon as she saw his smile the girl's face stiffened and she wrenches herself free. Whatever excitement had been in the air died abruptly; the boys sat silently for a while. Once the man thought he caught a quick flick of the black-haired boy's glance directed toward himself, then the boy brought his hand down on the counter with a slap and stood up. 'Well, let's see if old Eighty-two'll take me on home, anyways,' he said. 'Come on, Will.'

'O.K.,' said the other, and pushed himself off his stool; the two tramped silently to the door. 'So long, Betty. Be good,' one of them called. The girl was at the coffee urn, drawing the coffee for the man's order. 'Be good, boys,' she said. They let the door slam casually behind them. The man heard the clatter of their feet on the sidewalk, the shutting of a car door, the grind of a starter. There was a slight rattle in the motor as it took hold,

the man noticed; it didn't sound like a car that would do eighty at that, he thought.

He was tempted to say as much to the girl when she brought his order over to the table. But he already had a feeling that he was in the way there, that his presence had spoiled something — when they were wrestling at the counter, for example. He said nothing. The girl set the dishes before him and retired behind the counter again. She stood there, leaning back against the wall, with her arms folded and her head turned sidewise to look out into the street all the while he ate.

When he got out on the street again it seemed quieter than before. The few cars that had been parked at the curb were gone, there were no men walking; there was only the row of squat brick business buildings facing him across the wide roadway. The awnings plunged their bases in shadow, he noticed; only the upper stories received the glow from the street lamps, and these stared down as if with a cold brow, austere. There was no welcome in them, and for a moment he stood uncertainly, half-minded to go back to the hotel at once; there was a telephone in the lobby there, he remembered. But in the end he turned in the other direction. I'll walk down a block or two and then back, he decided.

At the end of the first block, there was a cigar store, its windows still lighted, and inside it a man, the proprietor probably, leaning over the counter reading a newspaper; no one else. A blue-and-white Bell telephone sign was tacked on the wall outside the door. And that was the end of the business district, apparently. In the next block, the ground sloped away a little, and the street ran between dwelling houses, among trees. There were no lights in any of them, and no movement; it was so still that he could hear not only his own footsteps but the echo of them as it came back from the walls of the houses. He went only a short way down the slope. Then he turned and, walking faster now, hurried back

toward the lights above. When he came to the cigar store at the corner he stopped abruptly and went in.

The man at the counter looked up from his newspaper as he entered, but he went directly to the telephone booth and, calling long distance, gave a Cincinnati number. He had to wait some time before the connection was completed, then the operator told him to deposit sixty cents and he dropped two quarters and a dime in the slots, the quarters making a loud, melodious *bong* and the dime a higher, tinkling tone; while the sounds were still chiming in his ears, he heard through them a voice at the other end of the wire saying, faintly, 'Hello.' It was a sound threadlike and remote, but he recognized it; it was his sister's voice, and he said, 'Hello, that you, Minnie? Hope I didn't wake you up. This is Fred.'

'Fred,' she said. 'Oh, hello, Fred.'

'I just got in here,' he went on, hardly waiting for her to finish. 'I come on near a hundred and fifty miles more since suppertime. So I thought I'd call up again and see how Ma is. I'm in a place called Grosvenor now, and I'll spend the night here and come on tomorrow. I ought to be in around noon,' he was saying when he heard her talking too, and he stopped.

But he found he couldn't hear half what she was saying. 'If I'd known where to reach you,' she said, and then she said something about knowing he'd call again, and the rest was a mumble. Suddenly he realized that she was weeping, and the thought made his heart drop like a stone, leaving him feeling empty within. 'What is it, Minnie? Tell me what it is?' he said loudly into the mouthpiece.

'If I knew how to tell you,' she said. 'Oh, Fred, she was a good mother to us, wasn't she? When I think all she done for us.' Then her weeping got louder; he could hear it plainly now, every sob, and at the sound a strange feeling overcame him, filling the emptiness and leaving him shaking with something dreadfully

like laughter. Me here, he kept thinking. Me here in this place, and this happening. But he didn't let any of that get into his voice. He kept his voice tight and hard. 'When did it happen?' he said.

'Just a little past eight o'clock,' she answered. 'We was all there, they called us back to the hospital. But she never recognized any of us. She never come out of the ether really, I guess,' she said. 'Even when you called up that last time I guess she was dying, poor thing. Only we didn't know it.' Then her voice got fuddled again with weeping, and in the midst of it another voice, closer at hand, cut in.

'Your three minutes are up,' it began. 'If you wish to ——' But he shouted over it as if over a barrier; he could hear his sister saying something, too. 'Well, good-bye, Min,' he called. 'I'll be there tomorrow. And you go to bed now, you get some rest. You need it, and ——' But just then there was a click and a deadness in the wires; whether Minnie had hung up or the operator had cut him off he had no way of knowing, but the link was broken. He could almost feel its severance and the abrupt re-establishment of the distance that lay between his sister and himself.

Leaving the cigar store, he walked slowly back to the hotel. Even the lunchroom was closed now, he noticed; the quiet of the street made him feel as if no one in the whole town was stirring but himself. It had happened around eight o'clock, Minnie had said. Thinking back, he figured that he must have been somewhere on the other side of Wheeling at the time. Just turning the headlights on, probably. Hurrying. There had been coal mines all along the road back there, he remembered; coal mines and big heaps of slag, and dark, repetitious coal towns. He still couldn't get used to the idea that his mother was dead.

But he didn't want to think about it. He didn't want to begin thinking about it until he had got out of this place and on to some place he knew. He crossed the street and passed the shut stores

under their awnings; as he neared the hotel, a car went by with a whoosh and a dazzle of headlights and swooped down the slope beyond, headed west. As he watched the car go, a queer sort of twinge ran through him, not so much an emotion as a contraction of the muscles strong enough to pucker his face and almost bring tears to his eyes. But he didn't want to begin thinking about it yet.

The lobby of the hotel was empty when he went in, but a light was still burning, and when he went up the stairs to the floor above he saw another one burning there — a single strong bulb at the end of the corridor. The man walked down the narrow path of illumination carefully and quietly. He had left the light on in his own room too, he remembered. He thought he'd feel better, more natural, somehow, when he reached his own room.

## BLACK TROUBADOUR<sup>1</sup>

BY DAVID L. COHN

**J**OE MOSS is a harp-blowing black man. When he bears down hard on his two-bit harmonica he can make trouble leave your weary mind, set your tired feet to stomping, bring Sweet Jesus to your backsliding soul. Joe Moss is a one-harp, two-harp, three-harp-blowing man. Sometimes on hot nights in summer when folks are sitting out on the front porch catching air, talking, or sleeping on a mattress stuck in the front doorway to get the benefit of the draft blowing through the open back door and at the same time to keep the dog from leaving the house, Joe takes a stand on the corner of Redbud Street and Cately Avenue. He draws a harp out of the belt that holds up his red corduroy trousers and slowly eases up on the blues just like a lonesome man sidling up to talk to a lady who has a mean and jealous husband.

The first notes of the long, lonesome, mournful tune scarcely seem to disturb the stillness of the night. They merge with it. For a little while you are unaware that anything new has come into the night; that music must always have been there. It must always have been part of the dusty road in the moonlight; of the smoky coal-oil lamps in the shacks; the querulous whine of mos-

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quitoes; the howling of dogs lost in the anguish of mating under the street light at the corner; the slow, reptilian crawling of crayfish in the muddy ditches; the pools of shadow between the close-packed shotgun houses; the broken picket fences and the fecund sunflowers heavy with dust and seed; the quiet voices talking, giggling; the sweaty hands, seeking, searching; the black, oily clouds scudding past the moon; and the far-off rumbling of the Cannon Ball train rounding the curve up above the oil mill. Joe bears down harder and harder. The notes of his harp tremble sadly on the air like a weary sinner laying his head at last on the bosom of Sweet Jesus. Gawd, save us sinners on Judgment Day.

Joe Moss is a rambling, rolling, train-riding, harp-blowing man. They know him on Rampart Street in New Orleans; in the hot-cat parlors and dice dens of Beale Street in Memphis; in Natchez, Vicksburg, Greenville, Helena; in all the river towns up to Cape Girardeau; as far west as Dallas, Texas. Winter and summer, fall and spring, Joe rambles the land, a sweat shirt and red corduroy trousers covering his nakedness, and a ragged hat on his nappy head. It ain't no need to work. It ain't no need to have no one woman and no one home. A man with music in his body can win hisself a woman and a home wherever he lights. A nigger ain't gonna have nothin' nohow, so it ain't no need to try to have nothin'. And it sho' ain't no sense to stay in no one place, 'cause when yo' foots itches to travel they's trains goin' whichever way you wants, and somebody, white or black, to feed you when you's hongry.

Joe was born to be a harp-blowing man, but he didn't know it until he was past twenty-one and the Albino Preacher told him right out in church before all the folks that he had the gift of song and music. Up to that time he had worked on Deep Snow Plantation just like any common man, chopping cotton, hoeing grass, ditching, clearing land for the white people, never going farther

from home than Greenville, fourteen miles away, and living with only three women from the time he was fifteen years old until he became twenty-one. Nowadays Joe laughs when he sees people chopping cotton in the hot sun; picking cotton on frosty mornings in the fall; felling trees in icy swamps. He rares back and laughs when they flash by him as he crouches on the blinders of that Pan-American train leaving out from New Awleens for Birmingham, Alabamer; when he rides that Manifest Freight from Memphis to Fulton, Kentucky.

As Joe plays the lonesome blues, up and down Redbud Street folks stop talking. Across the road in the jailhouse prisoners come to the windows of their cells and stick their heads close to the bars to drink in the music lingering on the air. Two high-yellow young couples driving down the street in a V-8 Ford automobile, on their way to the Chinaman's store to get something t' eat, pull up and stop. By this time everybody in the neighborhood knows that Joe Moss, the harp-blowingest man in Mississippi, is back in town. Suddenly Joe sticks the harp in his belt and begins to sing in a warm, rich baritone that can be heard two blocks away:

It's a po' boy long way from home.  
I ain't got no money,  
Ain't got nowhere to go,  
Just stand at de railroad crossin',  
Waitin' to hear de whistle blow.

Up and down the street women cock their ears to catch every word, every note, every tiny evocation of sound. Men listen, too, their souls wooed by the song, their hearts touched with jealousy and vague, uneasy stirrings. The song ends. The night is given over again to the whining of mosquitoes, the brittle crashing of heavy-bodied insects against the dazzling street lamp on the corner, the howling of dogs, and the rumbling of the Cannon Ball as it moves slowly through New Africa on its way to the near-by

station. The air is heavy with heat. There is a ring around the moon. Gwine rain tomorrow sho'. Lawd Jesus, he'p us. We's heavy laden.

Then Joe pulls two harps out of his belt. Once, long ago, when he was a fatherless chile and got religion, he promised the Lawd that he would quit blowing the blues and play nothing but church songs. But Joe is a man who is messed up in his weary mind, and he can't always remember what he promised the Lawd and what he didn't promise. But shucks. If you blows the blues now and then and plays church songs now and then, the Lawd sho' ain't gwine be vexed with you.

He stands now under the street light, two harps gleaming silver in the great black gash of his mouth, and blows like Gabriel on Judgment Mawnin'. Tiny rivulets of sweat chase one another through his kinky hair and roll down his neck and throat to merge in little streams lost in the sea of his broad back and thick chest. His torso moves in slow circles on his hips; his feet tap time in the dust; his neck moves in convulsive jerks while his hands tremble on the harps, and the pupils of his eyes dilate until they become spots of black in pools of cream-white. Jesus, come take me home.

Well, don't you mind me dyin',  
Lawd, don't you mind me dyin',  
Lawd, don't you mind me dyin',  
Jesus gwine make up my dyin' bed.

Well, I'll be sleepin' easy,  
Well, I'll be sleepin' easy,  
Well, I'll be sleepin' easy,  
Jesus gwine make up my dyin' bed.

Across the street in the jailhouse, Mankind Armstrong stands with an ear hard against the iron bars of his cell listening. He knows that Joe is singing the gospel truth. His mama told him it was the truth long ago when he was a little boy on Sunup Planta-

tion. Reverem Green, the pastor of his church, told him it was so when he was baptized in Possum Slough. Even the white folks — and they ain't got much sense no matter if the Law is on they side — believe you're going to Jesus when you die. Now Mankind is on his way — on his way to know the truth beyond all dispute; on his way to Jesus; on his way unscarred from his life on earth except for a tiny dislocation of his vertebrae that will occur when he drops through the trapdoor of the newly erected gallows that stands in the back yard of the jailhouse. Mankind listens to Joe Moss blowing on his harps, laughs out loud, and shouts to the prisoner in the adjoining cell: 'Nigger, ain't dat de beatin'est, harp-blowin'est man you ever has heerd?'

Once more silence falls on Redbud Street as Joe's song is ended. Then the Law walks up on him out of the darkness — the white-faced Law in a sweaty shirt, dust-stained shoes, gleaming badge beneath sagging suspenders, and black-and-silver pistol stuck in a sweat-stained holster.

Joe takes off his hat as the Law approaches and holds it respectfully in his hand. It wasn't no need to run, and besides Joe hadn't done nothin'.

'Good evenin', Cap'm,' Joe said.

'Good evenin', Joe,' the Law said.

'Boss Man, how come you knows my name?' Joe asked.

"Cause every nigger in New Africa say they gonna kill you if you keep comin' around here blowin' them harps and monkeyin' round with their women."

Joe smiled complacently. 'Cap'm,' he said, looking at the ground, 'I'm a man don't never kick in no other man's stall.'

'Well, maybe you do and maybe you don't. That ain't no skin off my teeth, and if you get killed messin' around here that won't be nothin' new. Anyhow, it ain't gonna be tonight. You been givin' me the creeps with them songs you been singin'. Now let's hear somethin' lively.'

'Yassuh, Boss,' replied Joe energetically, a note of vast relief in his voice. This was not the first time he had played for the Law, but it was the first time as a free man. Once, down in Natchez, Joe had been arrested and had blown himself clean out of police court. Judge Patterson had asked him to play a tune to see if he was just a jackleg musician, and then had kept him playing all morning long while the other prisoners awaiting trial joined in the singing, and when it was all over the Judge told Joe to come back to see him whenever he was in town and gave him a dollar bill to boot. It ain't no way on earth to tell what white folks will do even if you's a two-headed man. And here Joe was facing the Law again under novel circumstances. 'Cap'm,' he said, 'how 'bout a mess of dem "St. Louis Blues"?'

'Go 'head,' said the Law, as it whittled a match into a toothpick and began to explore the cavities of its teeth.

Joe took three harps out of his belt, put them in his mouth, and began passionately to celebrate the immortal fame of that St. Louis woman who tied men to her apron strings. Up and down the length of Redbud Street the music ran. Up and down the length of the street bare feet, shoed feet, stocking feet, black feet, brown feet, chocolate feet, tan feet, café-au-lait feet, smooth feet, splay feet, flat feet, calloused feet, began to beat time. Up and down the length of the street bodies swayed. Fat bodies, thin bodies, fecund bodies, sterile bodies, old bodies, young bodies, flat-chested bodies, full-breasted bodies, swayed with the music. Bodies moved closer to bodies; lips to lips; chests to breasts; legs to legs; thighs to thighs — moved closer, swayed, beat time. Up and down the length of the street, children stirred in their sleep; stirred, awoke, and crept to the front door sensing rather than hearing something strange in the night. Up and down the street, women hissed to their children to git back in bed 'fo' I busts you wide open. Up and down Redbud Street, old men and old women dreamed of their hot lost youth when they

could have talked under their clothes with the strongest in the land.

The harps stopped blowing. The Law walked away, moonlight on its badge, moonlight on its black-and-silver pistol, moonlight on its dusty-silver shoes, moonlight on its wet shirt sloping over rounded shoulders. The hot air pressed closer on Redbud Street. The ring around the moon pressed closer on the moon. Frogs croaked in the stagnant ditches; an automobile coughed in the far distance and was suddenly still. From the river came the mournful wail of the whistle of the *Tennessee Belle* as she backed out into the stream bound down for way landings and New Awleens. Silence and heat and moonlight lay heavily on Redbud Street.

Then doors up and down the length of the street began to bang. Doors popped, screeched, slammed, and boomed as they were violently shut. Porch swings, suddenly deserted, swayed for a moment or two and then were still. Mattresses vanished inside the shacks. Soon the street was deserted save for old men and women who remained rocking in their chairs catching little puffs of breeze that came up from the river, and slapping with weary hands at the mosquitoes that sang about their ears and legs.

Joe Moss stuck three harps into the belt that held up his red corduroy trousers, and walked slowly over to Mee Hop's café on Nelson Street to get him a can of sardine-fish and crackers. Chinermens was funny. Funnier even than white folks. They wouldn't give you nothing for no music if you blowed yo' lungs out. But it might be some niggers there and them sardine-fish could be turned into a mess of chitlins.

A few minutes later the chitlins were frying on Mee Hop's stove, and Joe sat smoking a Two Orphans cigar, voluptuously sniffing the rich, satisfying, mingled aromas of fat entrails and tobacco. Around Joe clustered a little group of his admirers. He took the cigar out of his mouth, spat on the floor, and laughed.

'I swears to Gawd,' he said, 'de way dem niggers banged dey doors sounds like de time Wetherbee's Hardware Store caught on fire and fawty thousand shotgun shells went off at de same time. I doesn't keer where de niggers at or who dey is, when Joe Moss tears off a piece on his harps de mens shuts dey doors and tells dey wimmens to stay way back in de kitchen to I done passed by.'

'Hit's sho' de truth,' said Virgie Mae Jones, as she put twenty cents on the counter and Joe Moss lifted a forkful of steaming chitlins from the plate.

## CORPORAL HARDY<sup>1</sup>

BY RICHARD ELY DANIELSON

### I

*I*N THOSE days, during the haying season, it was my duty to keep the men in the fields supplied with sufficient cooling drink to enable them to support the heat and burden of the day. According to our established custom, this cooling drink consisted of cold water from the spring, flavored, for some obscure New England reason, with molasses, and it had to be freshly renewed every hour. We had plenty of ice in the icehouse, but there was a stubborn tradition that ice water was 'bad' for men working in hayfields under the hot sun.

So every hour I carried down a brown jug containing the innocent mixture of 'molasses 'n' water' to the hands, each one of whom would pause in his work, throw the jug over his upper arm, drink deeply thereof, wipe the sweat off his forehead, say 'Thanks, Bub,' and go on making hay. I was only ten years old, but it was no hardship to carry the jug, and it was fun to see their Adam's apples working as they drank.

This was routine practice on our Connecticut farm. Mostly the farm hands — 'hired men,' we called them — came back to the house at noon and ate in the kitchen, after washing up at the

pump outside. But in haymaking season each man sought a patch of shade, and his meal was carried to him there, to be eaten in the fields. I suppose the men's overheated bodies cooled off in the wisps of breeze drifting across the scorching 'mowings' more effectively and comfortably than would have been possible in a hot summer kitchen. I am sure that my father did everything he could to make their lot as comfortable and healthy as possible. He worked with them, under the same conditions, setting them an example of careful, efficient labor. He differed from his men only in the fact that he was always cleanly shaved, that he gave orders and directions, and that he wore a silk shirt even in the hayfields. Nobody objected in the least to this token, for he was 'the owner,' and he had been to college, and everyone admitted that he was fair and square.

On such occasions, when the men were given their 'dinners' out of doors, I always carried his victuals to Mr. Hardy, because I liked to sit with him while he ate and listen to his stories. I think he enjoyed talking, in his racy Connecticut vernacular, to such a fascinated audience of one. He was a Civil War veteran, like my father, who, however, had been too young to enlist until the last year of the war and had seen almost no active service. But Mr. Hardy was a soldier. Congress had given him a medal — of honor — and all men regarded him with respect.

As I look back and remember his stories, I think he must have been the most modest man I have ever known. Certainly he never thought of himself as a hero. He would accept no pension. 'I'm able-bodied. I can work, can't I?' But, alas, he was not really able-bodied. He had been grievously wounded several times, and in 1895, when I fetched and carried for him and sat at his feet, it was pitiful to see his valiant efforts to fork hay on the wagon or do the other farming tasks which require muscular strength. He was thin and bent, but his face was brown and clean and his blue eyes bright and indomitable.

My father employed Mr. Hardy whenever there was work to give him, and treated him — I did not, at that time, know why — differently from the other hired men. He was poor, he lived alone, he was unsuccessful, and in New England then we rated people by their comparative 'success.' But he worked stoutly and asked no favors of anyone. It was generally conceded that Mr. Hardy, if a failure, was nevertheless a good man.

I remember the last day I served him. I brought him his dinner in a basket — cold meat 'n' potatoes, 'n' bread 'n' butter, 'n' cold coffee, 'n' pie. He was seated in the shade of an oak tree, leaning against a stack of hay. I put the food down beside him and sat down, hugging my knees and rocking back and forth. It was pleasant there, with the smell of the hay and the drone of the bees, and the good, warm feeling of the earth.

Mr. Hardy lay back against the haymow. 'Thanks, Jackie,' he said. 'I don't seem to be hungry today. It's hot and this tree don't give much shade. Why, dammit, it's like that mean little oak tree down to Chancellorsville.'

I said, 'Oh, Mr. Hardy, you've told me about Antietam and the Wilderness, but you've never told me about Chancellorsville. What was it like?'

He said slowly, 'I ain't never told nobody about Chancellorsville, and I don't aim to tell nobody — grown-up, that is. But I'd kind of like to tell somebody that don't know nothing — like you — about it, for the first and last time. You'll forget it, and it would kind of ease my mind.'

## II

Mr. Hardy hoisted himself a little higher on the haymow and made a pretense of eating some bread and meat.

'Chancellorsville,' he said, 'was a bad battle, an awful bad battle. We didn't fight good and they was too many of them and I lost my captain.'

'Who was he?' I asked.

'Why,' he said, incredulously, 'you oughta know that! He was Captain William Armstrong, commandin' Company B, 39th Connecticut. 'N' his twin brother, Ezra, was lootenant. He was younger by an hour or so, and they was twins. They never was two men as much alike — in looks, that is, for they was quite unlike inside. The lootenant was always stompin' around an' shoutin' an' wavin' his arms, an' the captain, he was always quiet an' soft-spoken an' brave an' gentle. He was a good man — he was an awful good man. I guess he was the best man I ever knowed.'

He paused and took a sip of his cold coffee. Then he said, 'Why, when we come to leave town to go in the cars to Hartford and then to Washington, their father — he was old Judge Armstrong, who lived in that big place up on Armstrong Hill — the Judge come up to me and says, "Nathan, you look after my boys,"' he said. "They're younger than you be. You kind of keep an eye on them, for my sake," he says. "They is good boys," he says. "I will, Judge," I says. "I'll do my best." An' he says to me, "I know you will, Nathan Hardy."

'But tell me, Mr. Hardy,' I broke in, for I was not interested in the Armstrong twins, 'what happened at Chancellorsville?'

'It was a bad battle, as I said. Them Rebs come charging out of the woods, hollerin' and yellin' and helligolarrupin', and they was too many of them. The lootenant, he kept stomping up and down, shouting, "Never give ground, boys! Stay where you are! Take careful aim! Never retreat!" Those was his words. I will never forget them, because he meant them. But my captain — I was next to him — says, "They're too many; we can't stop 'em. Tell the men to retreat slowly, firing as often as they can reload." Just then it hit him right in the chest. *Thunk!* was the noise it made; just like that — *thunk!* I caught him as he fell, and the blood began to come out of his mouth. He tried to speak, but he

was vomiting blood dreadful, so all he could do was to make faces, and his lips said, "Tell Elizabeth . . ." and then he died. I put him down and noticed we was under a mean little oak tree on the edge of our trenches.

"Then they was around us, hairy men with bayonets, stabbin' and shootin' and yellin', and we soldiers had kind of drifted together in groups and the lootenant was shouting, "Don't retreat, men!" and he got hit right in the knee and fell down; and so I picked him up and put him across my shoulder and started for the rear. He kep' hittin' me in the face and swearing. "You damn coward! You left my brother there and you're making me retreat!" I says to him, "Ezra, be reasonable; I'm takin' you to an ambulance. You ain't fit to fight, and as soon as I can I'm goin' back to bury William. They ain't goin' to shovel him into no trench," I said. So he stopped hitting at me.

"I was strong then, and I must a carried him what seemed a mile or a mile and a few rods when we come to some stretcher men near a house, and I said, "You take this officer to the nearest surgeon. They got to saw his leg off." And they said, "We ain't carryin' no wounded. We're a burial detail." I said, pulling my pistol out, "You will be if you don't carry this man. I'm kind of tuckered, but I ain't too tuckered to shoot." So two of them carried him, and I went along with my pistol till we come to a place where surgeons was carving men up and I handed over the lootenant. He come to as I did so, and said, "You scoundrel, you made me retreat. I'll never forgive you!" I said, "Ezra, they're going to saw your leg off and you'll never fight again, but I'll bury William if it's the last thing I do." He says, "Is that a promise?" And I says, "That's a promise. But it ain't a promise to you — it's one I made to your pa."

"So I stayed with him and helped hold him while they sawed his leg off. They havin' run out of chloroform, it took four of us to hold him. And when it was over he was unconscious, and they

put him in a cart with some others and took him away. So I went back to the house where the burial men were loafing. It was pretty ruined, but I found a shingle that was almos' clean and I wrote on it, in the light of a fire, 'cause it was dark then:

CAPT. WILLIAM ARMSTRONG  
COMMANDING CO. B., 39 CONNECTICUT

*He was an awful good man*

'Then I borrowed a spade from this burial party. We had an argument about it, but I persuaded them with my pistol and I started off toward the Rebel lines. I hadn't gone very far when I come to a place which was thick with men moanin' and screamin' and lots that wasn't sayin' nothing at all. I didn't want to walk on them an' I couldn't help them, having nothing on me but a shingle and a spade and a pistol, an' I decided I couldn't find the captain in the dark anyhow, so I set down and tried to sleep, for I was tuckered. . . . But they was one man bothered me. He kep' callin' out, "Wont someone for Jesus Christ's sake kill me? Won't someone kill me?" And he kep' it up so long I knew he couldn't die and was in pain. So I crept around till I located him and I says, "Is it bad, brother?" And he says, "For Christ's sake kill me. I can't die." So I felt around in my pockets and found a sulphur match and looked at him and he was all torn to pieces. And I said, "I don't blame you. I'll do it." And he says, "God bless you." So I took out my pistol and put it right between his eyes and shot him. Then I threw away my pistol. I set there the rest of the night waitin' for the dawn. It was a long time comin'.

### III

'When it come gray, I started out with my shingle and my spade and I went along till I was challenged by the Rebel pickets and sentries. I answered, "Union burial detail. I'm comin' for

to bury my captain." They begun shootin' at me and I don't know as I blame them. I was comin' out of the mist and they couldn't see that I was alone an' wasn't armed. So they shot real hard, and one bullet struck me in the left thigh and I fell down. Fortunately I had a belt, and I sat up and took it off and strapped it real tight over my wound, and my britches was tight at the waist so they didn't come down, and I got up and went on.

"They stopped shootin' and a man with a bayonet got up and said, "Yank, you're my pris'ner." And I said, "I know I be, but I ain't your pris'ner till I bury my captain." And I held up my shingle and spade. He said, "Where's he lie?" And I said, "About quarter mile from here and maybe a few rods, under a mean little oak tree; and," I says, "you take me there and I'll bury him and then I'm your pris'ner. They ain't goin' to stuff my captain into no ditch," I says. He says, "You may be crazy, Yank, or you may be a spy. You come with me an' I'll turn you over to the captain."

"Your captain alive?" I asks.

"I reckon so," he says.

"Mine's dead," I says, "and I aim for to bury him."

"So he tuk me away with his bayonet in my back and the blood was squilchin' in my boot, but I got along to where his captain was and the captain asked questions, and the Rebel soldier, he tol' all he knew, an' the captain says, "Where's he lie?" An I says, "By a mean little oak, where our lines was yesterday mornin'."

"An' the captain says, "That ain't far away. I'll send a detail to bury him." I says, "Ain't nobody goin' to bury the captain but me," I says. "After that, I'll be your pris'ner."

"They was a young man dressed up all pretty with gold braid on his uniform, and he laughed kind of loud and he says, "Saves us the trouble of buryin' him!" an' the captain turns on him, real stern, and says, "Lootenant, this is a brave soldier," he says,

"who come back under fire and was wounded to bury his company commander and give himself up as pris'ner. I will not have him insulted or laughed at," he says. Then he turns to me an' says, "What is your name an' rank?"

"Corporal Nathan Hardy, Co. B, 39th Connecticut," I says.

"An' he says, "Corporal, you and I an' these men," turnin' around to the five or six Reb's who was listenin', "will go together to find your captain."

"So we went and I found him, underneath that mean little oak tree, and he looked dreadful. His eyes was open and they was an awful lot of blood on his shirt where his coat was torn open, and he was lyin' all sprangled out an' undignified. An' the first thing I done was to straighten him out. I spit on my sleeve and wiped the blood off his mouth the best I could. An' I closed his eyes an' buttoned his coat an' crossed his arms. They was kind of stiff, but I done it, an' I brushed him off and layed him out regular.

"Then I started diggin', an' it would have been easy if it hadn't been for my leg and all the blood was in my boot. Six foot four or thereabouts it was, and three foot deep — not as deep as I wanted, but I couldn't dig no deeper, I was so tuckered. But it was an honest grave, for I was real handy with a spade in them days. Then I stood up and said, "Will two o' you Reb's hand the captain to me?" Which they done, and I laid him in the grave. An' as I stood lookin' down at him lyin' there, I says to myself, "Ain't nobody goin' to shovel no dirt on the captain's face — nobody, nobody, nobody at all, not even me!" So I took my coat off and laid it over him, coverin' up his face best I could. I didn't want to go to no Rebel prison in my shirt, but I wouldn't have no one shovel dirt on the captain.

"Then the two Reb's pulled me out of the grave, real gentle and considerate. An' then I noticed they was a Rebel general there settin' on a blood horse. How long he bin there I don't

know. He looked at me and see I was wounded and peaked, and he says, stern an' hard, "Captain, what's the meanin' of this? This man's wounded and weak," he says. "Do you force wounded men to bury the dead?"

"The captain went over to him and began talkin' to him low and earnest, seemed like, all the time I was fillin' in the grave. An' when I had patted the mound even, so it looked good, and had stuck the shingle in the new earth at the head of the grave, I come over to where the general was, limpin' and leanin' on my spade, an' I saluted — couldn't help it; I kind of forgot he was a Rebel — an' I says, "General, I'm your pris'ner. I buried my captain. I ain't a great hand at askin' favors, an' your captain and these Rebs has been real good to me. But I wanna ask one more. I was raised Episcopal, which was unusual in our town, and so was the captain. I'd kind of like to say a prayer before I surrender . . . ."

#### IV

Here Mr. Hardy seemed to doze for a little. 'Where was I?' he asked, rousing after a few minutes.

"You had just gone up to the general and asked if you could say a prayer before you surrendered."

"Yes, yes, so it was. The general said, "Corporal Hardy, I am an Episcopalian too, and you shall say your prayer."

"So he dismounted and took off his hat, and he and I kneeled down by the grave, and it was awful hard for me to kneel. And when we was there kneelin' I looked up for a minute and all them Rebs was standin' with their caps off and their heads bowed, nice and decent, just like Northern people. An' then I had a dreadful time, for to save my life I couldn't remember a prayer, not a line, not a word. I had heard the burial service often enough and too often, what with Pa and Ma an' all kinds of relations, but my brains was all watery an' thin, seemed like, an' I couldn't

remember nothin' at all. I don' know how long 't was till some-  
thin' come driftin' into my mind. It wa'n't from the burial  
service; 't was somethin' we used to chant in Evenin' Prayer.  
So I says it, loud as I could, for I was gettin' awful feeble.

"“Lord,” I says, “now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in  
peace, according to Thy Word . . .” An’ I couldn’t remember or  
say any more. The general, he helped me to my feet, spade an’  
all, an’ I looked him in the face and, by creepers, they was tears  
in his beard. Soon as I could speak I says, “General, you’ve  
been real good to me and I thank you. An’ now I’m your pris’ner,  
wherever you want to send me.”

‘An’ he says, “Corporal Hardy, you will never be a pris’ner  
of our people as long as I live and command this corps.”

‘An’ I broke in, awful scared he had misunderstood, and I says,  
“General, you don’t think I was prayin’ for *me* to go in peace!  
I’m your pris’ner; I’m not askin’ for no favors. I was thinkin’  
of the captain — and me too, perhaps, but not that way. I can  
go anywhere now. I —”

‘He cut me short. “Corporal Hardy,” he says, “I know to  
Whom you was prayin’ and why, an’ I haven’t misunderstood  
you at all. Captain,” he says, “I want a detail of six men an’ a  
stretcher and a flag of truce to take this brave soldier an’ — an’  
Christian gentleman back to the Union lines; an’ I want this  
message, which I have dictated and signed, delivered to the com-  
manding officer to be forwarded through channels to the Secre-  
tary of War or the President. Those people can hardly decline  
this courtesy, under the circumstances. . . . Wait, Carter, I wish  
to add a few lines.” So he put the paper against his saddle and  
he wrote for some time.

‘Then, kind of in a dream, I heard the Rebel captain say,  
“Sir, if the General permits, I would like to lead this detail to  
the Union lines and ask to be blindfolded and deliver your mes-  
sage to the Division Commander.”

‘An’ the General says, “Captain, I am very glad you made that request, and I commend your behavior. It is only fittin’ that the officer escortin’ Corporal Hardy with my message should be of field rank, and I shall put in my order for your promotion. You are a pretty good soldier, yourself,” he says — only he didn’t say it that way.

‘All this time I was kind of waverin’ around, but I heard most all they said; and because I was feeble from losing blood an’ the battle an’ buryin’ the captain an’ a kind of feverish feelin’, things begun to spin around, and I started walkin’ this way and that way with my spade, tryin’ to stand up, knowin’ I couldn’t much longer. I heard someone yell, “Catch him!” An’ the next thing I knowed I was in a bed of straw and they was probin’ for the bullet in my leg. Then I don’t remember nothin’ till I woke up in a bed, a clean bed, with a nice-lookin’ woman leanin’ over me, wipin’ my head with a cold, wet towel. I says, “Where am I?”

‘An’ she says, “You’re in the hospital of the Sanitary Commission in Washington. An’ oh, Corporal Hardy,” she says, “I’m so glad you’re conscious, for today the President is comin’ to give you the Medal of Honor.” An’ I says, “Listen, Sister, I gotta get out of here. I don’t care for no President or no medal — I gotta bury the captain. He’s lyin’ down there under a mean little oak. Gimme my clothes,” I says; “I want a spade and a shingle.” An’ she says, “Corporal, you buried your captain an’ buried him fine. That’s why the President is comin’ to see you. Now you just drink this and go to sleep for a while, and I’ll wake you when the President comes.”

‘So I drank it and kind of slept, and when I woke up there was the ugliest man I ever see, leanin’ over and pinnin’ something to my nightshirt, an’ he says, “Corporal Hardy, even the enemy call you a brave soldier and a good man. Congress has voted you this medal. God bless you,” he says.’

Mr. Hardy yawned and closed his eyes, and leaned against the haymow. He had told the tale he had to tell — once, to one person.

'But, Mr. Hardy,' I said, 'what happened to the lieutenant, and who was Elizabeth?' I wanted the story all tied up in ribbons.

'Who?' he said. 'The lootenant? Oh, Ezra come back and married Elizabeth and they went to live in Massachusetts. Seems he went aroun' sayin' he couldn't live in no town where people pointed at him and thought he had run away leavin' his dead brother. Naturally no one done so or thought so. But, for all his stompin' and shoutin', he was sensitive, an' he bore me a grudge for takin' him away. I don't see as how I could-a done different. I'd promised the old Judge I'd look after his boys an' I've allus aimed to keep my promises.'

Just then my father came up to us. It was unlike Mr. Hardy to sit in the shade while other men had started to work again, and Father looked worried. 'How are you feeling, Nathan?' he asked.

'Why, John, I'm plumb tuckered out, and that's a fact. I don' know as I can do much more work today. Seems like I never did fare good under these mean little oak trees,' and he glanced sharply at me with an expression that was almost a wink. We shared a secret.

Father looked startled, as if he thought Mr. Hardy's wits were wandering.

'I tell you what, Nathan,' he said, 'you've had all the sun you need. I'll send the wagon and they'll take you up to the house, where you can be cool and rest for a while.' And, for once in his life, Mr. Hardy made no protest over having 'favors' done for him. Father took me aside. 'Jackie,' he said, 'you run up to the house and tell your mother to make the bed in the spare room

ready, and then you go to the village and tell Dr. Fordyce he's wanted. I don't like Nathan's looks.'

Before I started running I glanced at Mr. Hardy, and I saw what Father meant. He was pale and flushed in the wrong places, though I hadn't noticed it at all when he was telling me about Chancellorsville.

So Mr. Hardy was put to bed in the spare room, and given such care and aid as we knew how to give. For several days he lay quietly enough, and, as I look back on it after all these years, I think that the weight and burden of his long, valiant struggle must suddenly have proved too great. He couldn't go on forever. Mr. Hardy was tuckered out.

Then for some time he alternated between unconsciousness and a mild delirium. He kept mumbling phrases: 'Take that quid out o' your mouth. 'T ain't soldierly!'... 'Ain't nobody goin' to bury the captain but me.' I knew what lots of his bewildered sayings meant, but there were many which were obscure. I sat with him every day for an hour or so when the rest of the household were busy, and I had instructions to call my elders if Mr. Hardy needed help or became conscious.

One day he opened his eyes and said, 'Here I am and I'm real easy in my mind—but I can't just remember what I said.' I went out and called my parents, who told me to stay outside. But I listened and I heard Mr. Hardy say, 'Call the boy in. He knows what I want said and I can't remember. He's young and 't won't hurt him and he'll forget.' So Mother beckoned me to come in and I said, 'What can I do, Mr. Hardy?'

'You can say what I said for the captain when I knelt down with the general.'

So I knelt down, and, having the parrot-like memory of childhood, I said, 'You knelt down and so did the general, and then you couldn't remember any of the words of the burial service, but you did remember something that was sung in the evening,

and you said, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word . . ." And I began to cry.

'That's right,' he said very faintly, 'that's right; that's it. Yes, Captain . . .'

My mother gathered me up and took me out and held me very close, rocking back and forth with me while I wept out how I loved Mr. Hardy and what a good man he was.

And that was why I was sent to my aunt and cousins at New London, where I could swim and fish and forget about battles and wounds and Mr. Hardy. But I didn't forget.

NOTE. The characters and situations, the incidents, even the military units mentioned in this story are entirely imaginary, and do not portray and are not intended to portray persons or events which may have existed in reality.

## THE RAT IS A MOUSE\*

BY HAL ELLSON

**H**YMIE pulled his cap down over his eyes and shoved his hands deep in his jacket pockets. Looking from side to side, he stepped from the shadow of the doorway and walked close to the buildings. He was tensed, his muscles knotted to lumps in his legs and arms and jaw. He could tell how the guys in the poolroom acted and how they looked at him that they knew. They were all too quiet. He knew that they knew even though no one had spoken. He hung around awhile in there and shot a game of pool, but he couldn't hold the cue without trembling. He couldn't keep his mind on the game. He knew they knew and were watching him when he leaned over the green felt under the light. When he finished the game, he said, 'See you later!' and walked out slowly.

As soon as he stepped out into the cool air of the late October night, and stood there in the doorway looking up and down and at the empty car across the street, he noticed how quiet it was. From under his cap he watched the car. His head was twisted so that he seemed to be looking down the street. Satisfied that no one was in there, his eyes moved from doorway to doorway up the

block. He tightened suddenly as if a hand had grabbed his insides and knotted them.

Near the corner Hymie saw the red eye of a butt in the doorway and the long vague length of a man in the shadow. He watched him. Behind him Hymie heard the clicking of the balls on the pool table and the talk, and now and then the laugh of one of the guys, and the low rumble of a bowling ball rolling up the alley and the contact and that ringing metallic sound of the pins as they went flying. In his mind he even saw the pins break from their triangle as the black ball crashed against them and split them. Then the sounds and the images faded.

The man in the doorway flicked the cigarette away and Hymie saw it loop through the dark and the red sparks drop from it and die. The man moved his head out further and Hymie saw that he was looking toward him. Across that distance they both stared at each other. Hymie held his breath. Time swept past and yet neither of them moved. Little beads of sweat popped out on Hymie's forehead, and his hands moistened with sweat. Then a woman came from around the corner and walked down the block. The man in the doorway turned his head and stepped out of the doorway. They stood together now as one and then they turned and went around the corner. Now there was only the block stretching away quiet and empty. Hymie's chest sagged. He caught his breath, sucking it in. He felt all his muscles give. He felt the wet of his hands and his brow. Now the sounds of the billiard balls and the voices of the guys came back to him again. The black bowling balls rumbled up the alleys and smashed the pins. He felt weak and yet relieved. He was so deep within himself, he did not notice the man come up behind him. He jumped, startled.

'What's the matter?' McCarthy said, laughing.

'Nothing,' he said.

McCarthy lit a cigarette. His face glowed in bright yellow for

a moment before he flicked the match away while still in flame. Then he exhaled and stretched and said, 'I think I'll hit the hay early. See you again, guy.'

Hymie watched McCarthy go on down the street, heard his steps die out and his shadow vanish. Silence swept up the block again.

Hymie stepped from the doorway. He knew he shouldn't have done it, but now it was too late. What he had squealed for dwindled to nothing compared to what might happen to him. It was only because he wanted more money. Now as he walked along he wondered. Maybe they didn't know. He was only kidding himself. The guy in the doorway wasn't waiting for him. The guys in the poolroom didn't act any different than on any other night. Suddenly he laughed in the quiet and heard the sound bound from the wall beside him as if it had substance. It was funny. He stopped trembling now and took a cigarette out and lit it. He slowed coming to the corner and sauntered around the turn with apparent calm, waiting. Nothing happened. The block was empty. He laughed again at his own fears. Then he lengthened his stride and walked on home.

Coming to the doorway of the house where he boarded, he slowed again. He didn't want to go in there now. The hallway was dark. A car turned the corner, swinging wide. That decided him. He moved toward the door quickly and went in and stood aside, pressed to the wall. Nothing happened. He faced the dark and the steps. Someone might be there. He waited, undecided. Then he opened the inner door slowly, cocked his head, and listened. The house was empty of sound. He looked behind him once more, then stepped into the hallway and moved to the first step and set his foot upon it softly and paused again and listened. He went up, moving through the void like a cat stepping across wet pavement. His wet palm gathered the dust on the banister as it slid over it. He wound around the curve at the head of the

stairs. There was no light on the landing either. He cursed under his breath and moved forward to the back of the landing. He stood before his own door. As he went to put the key in, his left hand took the knob. The door moved. The knob was like a hot stone in his hand. There was no sound. Someone could be in there. He released the knob and pushed the door back and heard the knob on the other side knock against the wall.

The room was quiet again. His eyes, growing used to the dark, sorted out the bulk of familiar furniture. He saw the soft weak light coming in at the window lying in a patch on the floor. He moved across the carpet and clicked the switch quickly and spun around. No one was there. He saw his scared face in the mirror. He laughed and turned away from it and went back to the door and locked it. Then he went to the window, coming from the side, and peered out at the empty street. He pulled down the shade. He stood in the middle of the room again and looked at himself in the mirror and ran his fingers through his thinning black hair, looked into the depth of his eyes, and then turned away and went to the bed and fell across it, face down.

He lay like that for a long time. His mind was blank. But then, slowly, not in words, but in pictures, it all came back to him as if a film of events were passing before his eyes. He turned over on his back and stared up at the ceiling. His hand slipped into his pocket and he took out a cigarette and lit it. He took a puff. Then he sat up on the edge of the bed and let the cigarette slip from between his two fingers to the rug. He stared at it a moment. Then he ground it out slowly with his heel.

Hymie dropped his head and held it with his hands, crushing his throbbing temples. The film ran before his eyes again, and again he saw himself go through the deal. But no one had seen them together; no one knew. He got up and went to his desk and opened it and took the pack of bills out and ran them through his hands like a pack of cards. Then he threw them down and went

over to the bed again and looked across at them lying there on the desk. He began to figure. If he skipped and they didn't know he had squealed, they surely would know then. If he stayed and was caught like a rat . . . But they didn't know. But his skipping would give him away. He couldn't go far. They'd follow him to another city and get him. They'd get him. The hours passed. No one came; nothing happened. He got up again. He felt better now. He had talked himself out of it. McGowan hadn't come. He lit another cigarette and smoked it to his finger-tips. He knew McGowan. With his temper he'd have gone into action long ago. He went to the mirror and combed his hair. Then he turned on the radio and sat down again with a racing sheet. He had to laugh. He had almost taken it on the lam and queered himself. He was safe. He knew it. Thinking it over, he wondered why he had become frightened. He knew he was slicker than McGowan and the gang. They were only tough guys, skells, gorrillas. If they had half his brains. He laughed. He went to the closet and got a bottle and poured himself a drink. It shot through him, burning. It was just what he needed. It lifted him. The radio was playing a swing tune. He felt good now. He nodded his head and flicked the ash from his butt. He whistled to the music coming over the radio and poured himself another drink of Jameson.

The phone rang in the corner of the room. Hymie stopped whistling; his lips were still pursed. All the thoughts he had gone through before came rushing back to him. He sat there. Something seemed to hold him in his seat and pressed him back. The phone rang again. Hymie crushed his butt out and stared at the phone now. Still he did not move.

Outside a car drove up in front of the house and stopped. Hymie got up and went to the radio and turned it off and then went toward the window. Seeing his shadow against the shade, he stepped aside. He listened now. No one got out of the car below

The phone rang again. Hymie looked around the little square room. It seemed to him like a trap. The phone rang insistently until his head turned to it. His eyes did not leave it. He could hear it ring in his head, too. He stared at it. Then he put his hand down upon it and gripped it. He took his hand away again. But it rang once more. He found himself again. He knew he had to play it the way he started. He picked up the phone and said, 'Hello!' He could not recognize his own voice.

A voice came over the wire. 'That you, Hymie?'

'Yeah,' he said.

'This is Mac.'

Hymie did not answer.

'Some one squealed on that Tillson job, you know,' Mac said. 'Two of the boys were nabbed.'

'Yeah,' Hymie said weakly, but gripping the phone and beginning to sweat again.

'We got him here.'

'Who?' Hymie said, swallowing.

'Joe Bananas.'

'Bananas?'

'Yeah. We got him over here now. We're going to take him to the playground and play beanbag with him. I sent the boys over for you. I'll see you later.' McGowan hung up.

Hymie put down the receiver slowly. 'Bananas,' he said. 'And it was me.'

A horn blew outside.

Hymie went to the window and pulled the shade aside. Downstairs he saw a white face in the car and a hand waving to him. He let go of the shade and turned around. It wasn't Bananas that squealed. He could tell them that. Bananas looked like a rat but he'd never squeal. He could tell Mac that. Hymie thought of all the good things he could say for Bananas. The horn honked again. But if they let Bananas go, what then? If they

didn't do it to Bananas? Maybe they'd... The horn honked again.

Hymie walked across the room and then came back for his cap. As he recrossed the room he glimpsed himself in the mirror, caught a flash of his eyes, and then he knew he wasn't going to say anything for Bananas. He knew he wanted to live too much. He put his cap on and pulled the peak down. Then he snapped the light off and went down the stairs.

Hymie came out of the doorway and crossed the sidewalk toward the car. He suddenly went cold. They could be trapping him. In his eagerness to play innocent he had forgotten that. Now it was too late. He came to the side of the car and stopped.

'Get in,' Willie Keech said.

Hymie opened the door and got in and sat back with the others. He did not speak. Keech pulled out from the curb and they went down the block and shot around the corner. Hymie tried to say something but his tongue was tied. The others in the car were silent. He began to wonder again. They were too quiet. He should have skipped instead of walking right into it. They had him now. He could feel himself beginning to tighten up inside again and start to sweat. He looked at their faces in the semi-dark of the big sedan.

The big car cut into the curb before the poolroom and they all got out. Hymie held back at the curb. He stooped and tied his shoe lace but no one stopped. He pulled the bow out after tying it the first time and watched them go in. There was no one else on the block. He turned his head and looked toward the corner. He wanted to run. Now the door had closed behind the last one of them. He looked down the block again. If they wanted him they wouldn't have left him out there alone. It was his nerves getting him again. What would they leave him out there for if they wanted him? He got up and entered the poolroom and went by the tables and nodded here and there to some of the players,

but all the while his eyes were on the door of the back office. He pulled his cap down a bit as he came to it so they wouldn't see his eyes so easily. Then he stepped into the little office in the back.

All of them turned their heads as Hymie entered. They stood about the room. McGowan sat on the edge of the desk, one cheek on and one cheek off; one leg hung in the air.

'Hello, Mac!' Hymie said.

Mac nodded his head.

Hymie looked in the corner of the room. Joe Bananas was trussed up in a chair and gagged. Hymie stared at him. It was quiet in the room. He swallowed.

McGowan swung his leg off the desk and took a cigarette from a pack that was lying there and lit up. His back was turned to Hymie. As he moved away from the desk he noticed the yellow piece of paper and he picked it up and read it. No one spoke. He crumpled the paper up and dropped it in the basket. Then went over and poked Joe Bananas, and Joe lifted his head and looked up at him. 'All right!' McGowan said, and he nodded to the guys.

Hymie stepped to the desk and took one of the cigarettes and lit it. Meanwhile a blanket was thrown over Joe Bananas and two of the gang picked him up.

They went out with him through the back door.

McGowan turned to Hymie and laughed. 'We'll fix his wagon,' he said.

Hymie smiled weakly, watching the two disappear in the back.

'Come on,' McGowan said.

Then they all moved out toward the back door.

McGowan put the light out. They stepped into the alley and walked through the dark. Hymie could feel Mac beside him, big, hulking Mac with the little pig eyes set in his fat, greasy face like two blue marbles. They walked out of the alley and onto the sidewalk.

Hymie could see the obscure figure in the back of the car and Keech at the wheel, his white face turned toward them. The guys who had preceded them stepped aside at the curb. McGowan opened the back door and got in. The others waited. Hymie followed McGowan in. Two of the guys got in the back with them and two got in the front. Then they drove off down the dark street in the late melancholy quiet of the autumn night.

No one spoke in the car. It sped along smoothly. Hymie's knees were up high. His feet were on Joe Bananas who lay there on the floor. Hymie knew where they were going. He knew what it was all about. But Joe Bananas didn't do it. Joe Bananas was a pretty good guy. Hymie wished he could take his feet off of him and put them somewhere, anywhere, but not on Joe. Then Hymie turned to McGowan and he saw him staring at him. They passed a light and he saw Mac's little pig eyes for a moment and a flash of his white face. Hymie opened his mouth. He wanted to tell Mac that Joe didn't do it but Mac's face scared him. He turned away and then he knew that he shouldn't have and he turned back and said, 'Where are we going, Mac?'

'Canarsie,' Mac said.

They were quiet for a while. Hymie knew what was going to happen, yet he said, 'What for?' It seemed that Mac was waiting for him to ask that question.

'We're going to dump a rat,' Mac said. 'He thought he could get away with it. He thought I didn't know he ratted.' Mac laughed. 'The rat is only a mouse. He thought I didn't know. I was playing with him all the time . . . like a cat with a mouse.'

Hymie laughed, too, but it was weak and forced. He was scared again. He saw a side of McGowan he had not noticed before. McGowan was playing a game. Hymie felt easier. He sat back crushed in as he was. Mac was smart, but he wasn't smart enough. Little Hymie was just one step ahead of him. Mac was playing with the mouse but he had the wrong mouse.

Hymie was really beginning to see how clever he was. Some of these days he'd be spitting orders at Mac and Mac would have to like it.

Mac gloated. He turned fully around now as they passed through the darkened Brooklyn streets. 'I gave him a rope and he hung himself,' Mac said. 'I watched him all the time like a little mouse and then I put my hand in the cage and grabbed him behind the ears.'

Hymie nodded. 'You're pretty smart, Mac,' he said, 'pretty smart,' all the while laughing to himself, thinking how much smarter he himself was.

The big car sped on through the dark streets; they went through blocks where there were trees. It was quieter here. Then they came to rough unpaved roads. Only here and there a house stood, and then the clamshell road stretched out before them and on both sides there was nothing but marsh.

Hymie took a deep gulp of the salty air. Mac was laughing. 'I let him think I didn't know,' he said. 'I bought him a drink. You should have seen his face. He thought he was fooling me.'

Hymie laughed with Mac and, to himself, he laughed at him. He was just a little trickier. Now he saw all the reasons why Mac thought it was Joe.

Suddenly the car stopped. The two white headlights cut a path up the clean white road. All about them they could hear the rhythmic drumming of the frogs in the marsh. Keech cut the motor and the sound of the frogs swelled and rolled over them like a wave.

'Put the lights out,' Mac said. His voice was edged with ice now.

The lights went out. The white road all but disappeared. They waited, listening.

'O.K.!' Mac said.

The door opened. The two guys got out and Hymie and Mac

followed. Then two more guys stepped out. Their feet crunched on the clamshells. The last two of the gang that had come from the car pulled out the blanketed body. It fell with a thud. They picked it up and carried it down from the road to the marsh. Keech turned around at the wheel. His face was a pale blur. The others went down to the marsh, too.

Mac turned to Hymie. Hymie was beginning to tremble again. 'You put him away, Hymie,' Mac said, calmly.

'Me?' Hymie said.

'Yeah, I had my fun with him. You give him the gift.'

Hymie paled. 'Why don't you?' he said.

'I just wanted to play the cat with the mouse with this rat. I just wanted to dangle him on a string.' Mac stared at Hymie. Then he turned and went down to the marsh too. Hymie followed him slowly; he felt the marsh grass give and spring beneath his feet. The others were shadows there. They stopped. Mac came up. Hymie followed him. He felt his knees buckling and a sickening sensation in his stomach. He stopped for a moment and let go. Then he wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and spat.

'All right!' Mac said.

Hymie heard the body drop and saw it there, a formless lump beneath the blanket. He came closer.

'Go ahead,' Mac said.

Hymie stood there; his thin lips quivered. He drew them back over his teeth and pressed them tight. He put his hand to his back pocket. Then he drew.

No one moved. Hymie dropped his arm. No one said anything. Then Mac stepped close to Hymie. Hymie saw his little eyes gleaming. Mac laughed in his face. Then Mac's laughter died out too. One of the guys stooped and yanked the blanket away. Hymie looked down. It wasn't a man. It wasn't Joe Bananas at all. Mac's face was close to Hymie's now, so close Hymie

could smell his breath. Mac laughed again. 'I was only playing,' he said. 'Like a cat with a mouse!'

Hymie looked at the men of shadow around him. All about was the night and darkness and in the sky the pale crescent of the moon. Then the drumming of the frogs died out forever.

## PRELUDE<sup>1</sup>

BY ALBERT HALPER

I WAS coming home from school, carrying my books by a strap, when I passed Gavin's poolroom and saw the big guys hanging around. They were standing in front near the windows, looking across the street. Gavin's has a kind of thick window curtain up to eye-level, so all I saw were their heads. The guys were looking at Mrs. Oliver, who lately has started to get talked about. Standing in her window across the street, Mrs. Oliver was doing her nails. Her nice red hair was hanging loose down her back and she didn't have much on. She certainly is a nice-looking woman. She comes to my father's newspaper stand on the corner and buys five or six movie magazines a week, also the afternoon papers. Once she felt me under the chin and said, 'Watch out, I'll get you when you grow up!' and then she laughed. My father laughed too, stamping about in his old worn leather jacket to keep warm. My old man stamps a lot because he has leg pains and he's always complaining about a heavy cold in his head.

When I passed the poolroom one or two guys came out. 'Hey, Ike, how's your good-looking sister?' they called, but I didn't turn around. The guys are eighteen or nineteen and haven't

ever had a job in their life. 'What they need is work,' my father is always saying when they bother him too much. 'They're not bad; they get that way because there's nothing to do,' and he tries to explain the meanness of their ways. But I can't see it like my father, I hate those fellas and I hope every one of them dies under a truck. Every time I come home from school past Lake Street they jab me, and every time my sister Syl comes along they say dirty things. So when one of them, Fred Gooley, calls, 'Hey, Ike, how's your sister?' I don't answer. Besides, Ike isn't my name anyway. It's Harry.

I passed along the sidewalk, keeping close to the curb. Someone threw half an apple but it went over my head. When I went a little farther someone threw a stone. It hit me in the back of the leg and stung me but it didn't hurt much. I kept a little toward the middle of the sidewalk because I saw a woman coming the other way and I knew they wouldn't throw.

When I reached the corner under the Elevated two big news trucks were standing with their motors going, giving my father the latest editions. The drivers threw the papers onto the sidewalk with a nice easy roll so the papers wouldn't get hurt. The papers are bound with that heavy yellow cord which my father saves and sells to the junk yard when he fills up a bag. 'All right, Silverstein,' a driver called out. 'We'll give you the five-star at six,' and both trucks drove off.

The drivers are nice fellas, and when they take back the old papers they like to kid my old man. They say, 'Hey, you old banker, when are you gonna retire?' or, 'Let's roll him, boys, he's got bags of gold in his socks.' Of course they know my old man isn't wealthy and that the bags in the inside of the news stand hold only copper pennies. But they like to kid him and they know he likes it. Sometimes the guys from Gavin's pitch in, but the truck-drivers would flatten 'em if they ever got rough with my old man.

I came up to the news stand and put my schoolbooks inside. 'Well, Pa,' I said, 'you can go to Florida now.' So my Pa went to 'Florida,' that is, a chair near the radiator that Nick Pappas lets him use in his restaurant. He has to use Nick's place because our own flat is too far away, almost a quarter-mile off.

While my father was in Nick's place another truck came to a stop. They dropped off a big load of early sport editions and yelled, 'Hey, there, Harry, how's the old man?' I checked off the papers, yelling back, 'He's okay, he's in Nick's.' Then the truck drove away and the two helpers waved.

I stood around, putting the papers on the stand and making a few sales. The first ten minutes after coming home from school and taking care of the news stand always excites me. Maybe it's the traffic. The trucks and cars pound along like anything, and of course there's the Elevated right up above you which thunders to beat the band. We have our news stand right up against a big El post and the stand is a kind of cabin which you enter from the side. But we hardly use it, only in the late morning and around 2 P.M., when business isn't very rushing. Customers like to see you stand outside over the papers ready for business and not hidden inside where they can't get a look at you at all. Besides, you have to poke your head out and stretch your arm to get the pennies, and kids can swipe magazines from the sides if you don't watch. So we most always stand outside the news stand, my father, me, and my sister. Anyhow I like it. I like everything about selling papers for my father. The fresh air gets me and I like to talk to customers and see the rush when people are let out from work. And the way the news trucks bring all the new editions so we can see the latest headlines, like a bank got held up on the South Side on Sixty-Third Street, or the Cubs are winning their tenth straight and have a good chance to cop the pennant, is exciting.

The only thing I don't like is those guys from Gavin's. But

since my father went to the police station to complain they don't come around so often. My father went to the station a month ago and said the gang was bothering him, and Mr. Fenway, he's the desk sergeant there, said: 'Don't worry any more about it, Mr. Silverstein, we'll take care of it. You're a respectable citizen and taxpayer and you're entitled to protection. We'll take care of it.' And the next day they sent over a patrolman who stood around almost two hours. The gang from Gavin's saw him and started to go away, but the cop hollered: 'Now listen, don't bother this old fella. If you bother him any I'll have to run some of you in.'

And then one of the guys recognized that the cop was Butch, Fred Gooley's cousin. 'Listen who's talkin',' he yells back. 'Hey, Fred, they got your cousin Butch takin' care of the Yid.' They said a lot of other things until the cop got mad and started after them. Then they ran faster than lightning, separating into alleys. The cop came back empty-handed and said to my father, 'It'll blow over, Mr. Silverstein; they won't give you any more trouble.' Then he went up the street, turning into Steuben's bar.

Well, all this happened three or four weeks ago and so far the gang has let us alone. They stopped pulling my sixteen-year-old sister by her sweater, and when they pass the stand going home to supper all they give us is dirty looks. During the last three or four days, however, they passed by and kinda muttered, calling my father a communist banker and me and my sister reds. My father says they really don't mean it, it's the hard times and bad feelings, and they got to put the blame on somebody, so they put the blame on us. It's certain speeches on the radio and the pieces in some of the papers, my father told us. 'Something is happening to some of the people and we got to watch our step,' he says.

I am standing there hearing the traffic and thinking it over when my little fat old man comes out from Nick's looking like

he liked the warm air in Nick's place. My old man's cheeks looked rosy, but his cheeks are that way from high blood pressure and not from good health. 'Well, colonel,' he says smiling, 'I am back on the job.' So we stand around, the two of us, taking care of the trade. I hand out change snappy and say thank-you after each sale. My old man starts to stamp around in a little while and, though he says nothing, I know he's got pains in his legs again. I look at the weather forecast in all the papers and some of them say flurries of snow and the rest of them say just snow. 'Well, Pa,' I tell my old man, 'maybe I can go skating tomorrow if it gets cold again.'

Then I see my sister coming from high school carrying her briefcase and heading this way. Why the heck doesn't she cross over so she won't have to pass the poolroom, I say to myself, why don't she walk on the other side of the street? But that's not like Sylvia; she's a girl with a hot temper, and when she thinks she is right you can't tell her a thing. I knew she wouldn't cross the street and then cross back, because according to her, why that's giving in. That's telling those hoodlums that you're afraid of their guts. So she doesn't cross over but walks straight on. When she comes by the pool hall two guys come out and say something to her. She just holds herself tight and goes right on past them both. When she finally comes up she gives me a poke in the side. 'Hello, you mickey mouse, what mark did you get in your algebra exam?' I told her I got A, but the truth is I got a C.

'I'll check up on you later,' she says to me. 'Pa, if he's lying to us we'll fine him ten years!'

My father started to smile and said, 'No, Harry is a good boy, two years is enough.'

So we stand around kidding and pretty soon, because the wind is coming so sharp up the street, my old man has to 'go to Florida' for a while once more. He went into Nick's for some

'sunshine,' he said, but me and Syl could tell he had the pains again. Anyway, when he was gone we didn't say anything for a while. Then Hartman's furniture factory, which lately has been checking out early, let out and we were busy making sales to the men. They came up the sidewalk, a couple of hundred, all anxious to get home, so we had to work snappy. But Syl is a fast worker, faster than me, and we took care of the rush all right. Then we stood waiting for the next rush from the Hillman's cocoa factory up the block to start.

We were standing around when something hit me in the head, a half of a rotten apple. It hurt a little. I turned quick but didn't see anybody, but Syl started yelling. She was pointing to a big El post across the street behind which a guy was hiding.

'Come on, show your face,' my sister was saying. 'Come on, you hero, show your yellow face!' But the guy sneaked away, keeping the post between. Syl turned to me and her face was boiling. 'The rats! It's not enough with all the trouble over in Europe; they have to start it here.'

Just then our old man came out of Nick's and when he saw Syl's face he asked what was the matter.

'Nothing,' she says. 'Nothing. I'm just thinking.'

But my old man saw the half of a rotten apple on the sidewalk, and at first he didn't say anything, but I could see he was worried. 'We just have to stand it,' he said, like he was speaking to himself, 'we just have to stand it. If we give up the news stand where else can we go?'

'Why do we have to stand it?' I exploded, almost yelling. 'Why do we ——'

But Mrs. Oliver just then came up to the stand, so I had to wait on her. I'm her favorite 'salesman,' she says, so my old man lets me take care of her. Besides, she's a good customer and there's more profit on two or three magazines than from a dozen papers.

'I'll have a copy of *Film Fan*, a copy of *Breezy Stories*, and a copy of *Movie Stars on Parade*,' she says. I go and reach for the copies. 'Harry,' she says, 'if you were Bob Taylor, would you let me kiss you just once?'

My face was still red from being sore, but she thought I was blushing. 'Listen,' she laughed, 'when you get ten years older you let me know!' Then she bent over toward me and said something in a low voice how she liked fellows who blushed. My old man didn't hear her, but he chuckled when he saw my face getting more red.

'Harry is a nice boy,' Mrs. Oliver told my father, patting my arm. 'I'm very fond of him.'

'Yes, he's not bad,' my father answered smiling. 'Only he has a hot temper once in a while.'

But who wouldn't have one, that's what I wanted to say! Who wouldn't? Here we stand around minding our own business and the guys won't let us alone. I tell you sometimes it almost drives me crazy. We don't hurt anybody and we're trying to make a living, but they're always picking on us and won't let us alone. It's been going on for a couple of years now and, though my old man says it'll pass with the hard times, I know he's worried because he doesn't believe what he says. He reads the papers as soon as he gets them from the delivery trucks and lately the news about Europe is all headlines and I can see that it makes him sick. My old man has a soft heart and every time he sees in the papers that something bad in Europe has happened again he seems to grow older and he stands near the papers kind of small and all alone. I tell you, sometimes it almost drives me crazy. My old man should be down in Florida, where he can get healthy; not in Nick Pappas' 'Florida,' but down in real Florida where you have to go by train. That's where he should be. Then maybe his legs would be all right and he wouldn't have that funny color in his cheeks. Since our mother died last year it

seems the doctor's treatments don't make him any better, and he has to skip a treatment once in a while because he says it costs too much. But when he stands there with a customer chuckling you think he's healthy and hasn't got any worries and you feel maybe he has a couple thousand in the bank.

And another thing, what did he mean when he said something two days ago when the fellas from Gavin's passed by and threw a stone at the stand? What did he mean, that's what I want to know. Gooley had a paper rolled up with some headlines about Europe on it and he wiggled it at us and my father looked scared. When they were gone my father said something to me, which I been thinking and thinking about. My Pa said we got to watch our step extra careful now because there's no other place besides this country where we can go. We've always been picked on, he said, but we're up against the last wall now, he told me, and we got to be calm because if they start going after us here there's no other place where we can go. I been thinking and thinking about that, especially the part about the wall. When he said that, his voice sounded funny and I felt like our news stand was a kind of island and if that went we'd be under the waves.

'Harry, what are you thinking of?' Mrs. Oliver asked me. 'Don't I get any change?' she was laughing.

And then I came down from the clouds and found she had given me two quarters. I gave her a nickel change. She laughed again. 'When he looks moody and kind of sore like that, Mr. Silverstein, I think he's cute.'

My old man crinkled up his eyes and smiled. 'Who can say, Mrs. Oliver? He should only grow up to be a nice young man and a good citizen and a credit to his country. That's all I want.'

'I'm sure Harry will,' Mrs. Oliver answered, then talked to Syl awhile and admired Syl's new sweater and was about to go away. But another half of a rotten apple came over and

splashed against the stand. Some of it splashed against my old man's coat sleeve. Mrs. Oliver turned around and got mad.

'Now you boys leave Mr. Silverstein alone! You've been pestering him long enough! He's a good American citizen who doesn't hurt anybody! You leave him alone!'

'Yah!' yelled Gooley, who ducked behind an El post with two other guys. 'Yah! Sez you!'

'You leave him alone!' hollered Mrs. Oliver.

'Aw, go peddle your papers,' Gooley answered. 'Go run up a rope.'

'Don't pay any attention to them,' Syl told Mrs. Oliver. 'They think they're heroes, but to most people they're just yellow rats.'

I could tell by my old man's eyes that he was nervous and wanted to smooth things over, but Syl didn't give him a chance. When she gets started and knows she's in the right not even the Governor of the State could make her keep quiet.

'Don't pay any attention to them,' she said in a cutting voice, while my old man looked anxious. 'When men hide behind Elevated posts and throw rotten apples at women you know they're not men but just things that wear pants. In Europe they put brown shirts on them and call them saviors of civilization. Here they haven't got the shirts yet and hang around poolrooms.'

Every word cut like a knife and the guys ducked away. If I or my father would have said it we would have been nailed with some rotten fruit, but the way Syl has of getting back at those guys makes them feel like yellow dogs. I guess that's why they respect her even though they hate her, and I guess that's why Gooley and one or two of his friends are always trying to get next to her and date her up.

Mrs. Oliver took Syl's side and was about to say something more when Hillman's cocoa factory up the block let out and the men started coming up the street. The 4.45 rush was on and we

didn't have time for anything, so Mrs. Oliver left, saying she'd be back when the blue-streak edition of the *News* would arrive. Me and Syl were busy handing out the papers and making change and our Pa helped us while the men took their papers and hurried for the El. It started to get darker and colder and the traffic grew heavier along the street.

Then the *Times* truck, which was a little late, roared up and dropped a load we were waiting for. I cut the strings and stacked the papers and when my father came over and read the first page he suddenly looked scared. In his eyes there was that hunted look I had noticed a couple of days ago. I started to look at the first page of the paper while my old man didn't say a word. Nick came to the window and lit his new neon light and waved to us. Then the light started flashing on and off, flashing on the new headlines. It was all about Austria and how people were fleeing toward the borders and trying to get out of the country before it was too late. My old man grew sick and looked kind of funny and just stood there. Sylvia, who is active in the high-school social science club, began to read the *Times* out loud and started analyzing the news to us; but our Pa didn't need her analysis and kept standing there kind of small and with that hunted look on his face. He looked sick, all right. It almost drove me crazy.

'For Pete's sake,' I yelled at Syl. 'Shut up, shut up!'

Then she saw our Pa's face, looked at me, and didn't say anything more.

In a little while it was after five and Syl had to go home and make supper. 'I'll be back in an hour,' she told me. 'Then Pa can go home and rest a bit and me and you can take care of the stand.' I said all right.

After she was gone it seemed kind of lonesome. I couldn't stop thinking about what my father had said about this being our last wall. It got me feeling funny and I didn't want to read the papers

any more. I stood there feeling queer, like me and my old man were standing on a little island and the waves were coming up. There was still a lot of traffic and a few people came up for papers, but from my old man's face I could tell he felt the same as me.

But pretty soon some more editions began coming and we had to check and stack them up. More men came out from factories on Walnut Street and we were busy making sales. It got colder than ever and my old man began to stamp again. 'Go into Nick's, Pa,' I told him. 'I can handle it out here.' But he wouldn't do it because just then another factory let out and we were swamped for a while. 'Hi, there, Silverstein,' some of the men called to him, 'what's the latest news, you king of the press?' They took the papers, kidding him, and hurried up the stairs to the Elevated, reading all about Austria and going home to eat. My father kept staring at the headlines and couldn't take his eyes off the print where it said that soldiers were pouring across the border and mobs were robbing people they hated and spitting on them and making them go down on their hands and knees to scrub the streets. My old man's eyes grew small, like he had the toothache and he shook his head like he was sick. 'Pa, go into Nick's,' I told him. He just stood there, sick over what he read.

Then the guys from Gavin's poolroom began passing the stand on their way home to supper after a day of just killing time. At first they looked as if they wouldn't bother us. One or two of them said something mean to us, but my old man and me didn't answer. If you don't answer hoodlums, my father once told me, sometimes they let you alone.

But then it started. The guys who passed by came back and one of them said: 'Let's have a little fun with the Yids.' That's how it began. A couple of them took some magazines from the rack and said they wanted to buy a copy and started reading.

In a flash I realized it was all planned out. My father looked kind of worried but stood quiet. There were about eight or nine

of them, all big boys around eighteen and nineteen, and for the first time I got scared. It was just after six o'clock and they had picked a time when the newspaper trucks had delivered the five-star and when all the factories had let out their help and there weren't many people about. Finally one of them smiled at Gooley and said, 'Well, this physical culture magazine is mighty instructive, but don't you think we ought to have some of the exercises demonstrated?' Gooley said, 'Sure, why not?'

So the first fellow pointed to some pictures in the magazine and wanted me to squat on the sidewalk and do the first exercise. I wouldn't do it. My father put his hand on the fellow's arm and said, 'Please, please.' But the guy pushed my father's hand away.

'We're interested in your son, not you. Go on, squat.'

'I won't,' I told him.

'Go on,' he said. 'Do the first exercise so that the boys can learn how to keep fit.'

'I won't,' I said.

'Go on,' he said, 'do it.'

'I won't.'

Then he came over to me smiling, but his face looked nasty. 'Do it. Do it if you know what's good for you.'

'Please, boys,' said my Pa. 'Please go home and eat and don't make trouble. I don't want to have to call a policeman ——'

But before I knew it someone got behind me and tripped me so that I fell on one knee. Then another of them pushed me, trying to make me squat. I shoved someone and then someone hit me, and then I heard someone trying to make them stop. While they held me down on the sidewalk I wiggled and looked up. Mrs. Oliver, who had come for the blue-flash edition, was bawling them out.

'You let him alone! You tramps, you hoodlums, you let him alone!' She came over and tried to help me, but they pushed her

away. Then Mrs. Oliver began to yell as two guys twisted my arm and told me to squat.

By this time a few people were passing and Mrs. Oliver called at them to interfere. But the gang were big fellows and there were eight or nine of them, and the people were afraid.

Then while they had me down on the sidewalk Syl came running up the street. When she saw what was happening she began kicking them and yelling and trying to make them let me up. But they didn't pay any attention to her, merely pushing her away.

'Please,' my Pa kept saying. 'Please let him up; he didn't hurt you, I don't want to have to call the police —'

Then Syl turned to the people who were watching and yelled at them. 'Why don't you help us? What are you standing there for?' But none of them moved. Then Syl began to scream:

'Listen, why don't you help us? Why don't you make them stop picking on us? We're human beings the same as you!'

But the people just stood there afraid to do a thing. Then while a few guys held me, Gooley and about four others went for the stand, turning it over and mussing and stamping on all the newspapers they could find. Syl started to scratch them, so they hit her, then I broke away to help her, and they started socking me too. My father tried to reach me, but three guys kept him away. Four guys got me down and started kicking me, and all the time my father was begging them to let me up and Syl was screaming at the people to help. And while I was down, my face was squeezed against some papers on the sidewalk telling all about Austria and I guess I went nuts while they kept hitting me, and I kept seeing the headlines against my nose.

Then someone yelled, 'Jiggers the cops!' and they got off of me right away. Nick had looked out the window and had called the station, and the guys let me up and beat it away fast.

But when the cops came it was too late; the stand was a wreck.

The newspapers and magazines were all over the sidewalk and the rack that holds the *Argosy* and *Western Aces* was all twisted up. My Pa, who looked sicker than ever, stood there crying, and pretty soon I began to bawl. People were standing looking at us like we were some kind of fish, and I just couldn't help it, I started to bawl.

Then the cops came through the crowd and began asking questions right and left. In the end they wanted to take us to the station to enter a complaint, but Syl wouldn't go. She looked at the crowd watching and she said, 'What's the use? All those people standing around and none of them would help!' They were standing all the way to the second El post, and when the cops asked for witnesses none of them except Mrs. Oliver offered to give their names. Then Syl looked at Pa and me and saw our faces and turned to the crowd and began to scream.

'In another few years you wait! Some of you are working people and they'll be marching through the streets and going after you too! They pick on us Jews because we're weak and haven't any country; but after they get us down they'll go after you! And it'll be your fault; you're all cowards, you're afraid to fight back!'

'Listen,' one of the cops told my sister, 'are you coming to the station or not? We can't hang around here all evening.'

Then Syl broke down and began to bawl as hard as me. 'Oh, leave us alone,' she told them and began wailing her heart out. 'Leave us alone. What good would it do?'

By this time the crowd was bigger, so the cops started telling people to break it up and move on. Nick came out and took my father by the arm into the lunchroom for a drink of hot tea. The people went away slowly and then, as the crowd began to dwindle, it started to snow. When she saw that Syl started bawling harder than ever and turned her face to me. But I was down on my hands and knees with Mrs. Oliver, trying to save

some of the magazines. There was no use going after the newspapers, which were smeared up, torn, and dirty from the gang's feet. But I thought I could save a few, so I picked a couple of them up.

'Oh, leave them be,' Syl wept at me. 'Leave them be, leave them be!'

## TO THE MOUNTAINS<sup>1</sup>

BY PAUL HORGAN

I

**J**ULIO lay as quietly as he could. Only his eyes kept moving, turning toward the open door that led into the other room, as if by looking there he could hear better what the women were saying. His brother Luis was asleep beside him. The same blanket of catskins covered them both. Luis could sleep no matter what happened. The firelight on the walls and the ceiling was enough to keep Julio awake, even if his mother were not weeping in the next room. It was a silent night outside; like all the other nights in this place of home.

'When the fire goes out I will go to sleep,' thought Julio; his legs ached from holding them still. Four nights ago his mother had given birth to a baby girl. Josefina Martinez came nine miles from Bernalillo to assist. The father was in Mexico on a wagon train. The trade in the summer and autumn of 1800 was promising, and the weather very fortunate. Rosa's baby came with no one there but her two sons and Josefina the midwife. They made a huge fire in the front room and left the door open so that the heat would wave silently through. The boys stayed outdoors and shuddered like horses under the November moon. From

within came the wafting firelight and the nimble sounds of repeated sufferings.

Each boy felt like the deputy of his father. Luis was sixteen and Julio was thirteen. Luis was a stout boy — legs and arms like cottonwood branch, round and wieldy. Julio was slender and something like a half-grown cat in his physical ways. He was wary and respectful of life's dangers. He had grown with caution, because fear slowly told him more as he grew up. Everything Luis did easily, because he was older, Julio had to learn to do because he was younger, and thus everything was harder for him. The boys had no one but each other for companions, mostly; for they lived in the Rio Grande Valley a way out from the village of Bernalillo. They sometimes went there on horseback, when their father could spare the animals from work in the fields. Once, riding to town, Julio's horse had stamped and run wild, because a hunter in the tall saplings by the field near the river had shot his musket at a rising goose. Julio often dreamed of it, and the triumph of regaining the horse's head.

The brothers slept and the firelight faded down.

In the back room, Rosa presently slept too, and Josefina sat watching her and the new baby.

Josefina was greatly girthed, with two circles of fat at her middle. She was heavy-faced and her eyes were kind, even when her tongue was sharp and filthy. Thus her character: good heart, from instinct; wicked mind, from dealings in the hard world.

The baby lay by its mother's side.

'The face of a *piñón*,' thought Josefina, staring at the tiny brown head and the little open mouth that breathed so roundly.

The house was thick as a fortress, with adobe walls. It stood on a little green flat of land above the fields, beyond which lay the Rio Grande. Over it went two mighty cottonwoods, planted by the grandfather of this house a long time ago, who himself had left the service of the Governor of New Spain to scratch his own

land and yield it to his own sons. To the east the fields faded into mesa country, rising face of gravelly sand that held dusty bushes. The mesa rolled away and lifted hills where little pine trees grew. In morning, distant under the early sun, the pine trees seemed to exhale a blue air; and from the blue air rose the mountains, whose mighty trees looked, far away, like scratches upon the face of blue rock.

The mountains were miles away from the house of the family, and sometimes they were altogether hidden by weather: cloud, or rain, or wind alive with dust. At other times the mountains were momentarily close, as if moved in golden light by the hand of God, and every cañon, every wind course and water hollow in the rock, stood clear to the eyes of the wondering brothers. Hardly a day of their lives failed to be somehow influenced by the mountains off there to the east.

Josefina came into the front room to kick some more wood on the dying fire; for cold was quick to get through her petulant flesh.

She woke Julio; but he lay with his eyes shut, identifying the noises she made, and the profane rumble of her musing. When she went back, he heard his mother speak sleepily; then the baby squeaked and began to cry, what sounded to him like a mortal utterance and farewell of that alien little life in his mother's bed.

'Yes, if you all four of you get through the winter, that will be one of God's little jokes,' said Josefina, slapping her hands on her cold belly. 'This house never gets warm; and nothing to cover with, those boys out there, freezing on the dirt floor with a dirty old catskin . . .'

'My husband will bring back plenty of money and furs and clothes from Mexico,' said Rosa. But she began to cry again, and mumble little sad doubts against the baby's hot temple.

'So, I will stay as long as I can,' said Josefina. 'But you know that can't be forever.—Be quiet now. You will choke the

baby. Here, I'll take her, though God knows she may freeze to death. Get back to sleep. I will warm her.'

Josefina took the baby.

Julio leaned and crouched from his bed to see what they did. There was a coldly steady candle burning by the wooden saint in the corner of the bedroom. Josefina held the baby with one arm and with her other hand pulled her tight dress away in front, and her huge bosom lay open and cavernous with shadow. There, at her warmest and most copious being, she laid the baby and folded her breasts to it, and drew her dress together and held her arms like a cradle. Her cheeks quivered at the striving touch of the baby; some pleasure deepened in her being; and for no reason that she could recognize, out of her assortment of past events — midwife, servant, thief, and harlot — she began to blush.

Her eyes watered and she smiled and sighed.

Julio backed into his bed again. His brother Luis flinched and jerked like a dog that is tickled when it dozes. Julio held his breath for fear he would wake Luis. Yet he wanted to talk to him. He wanted to stir his brother into a fury of doing; to save this family; to prove that it was not a world for women — that it was their own little tiny sister who so blindly threatened their mother's life and will, and who opened the disgusting bosom of a fat witch to lie there for warmth!

So his thoughts were confused and furious.

The fire was alive again in little flames like autumn leaves. He could not sleep. He could not forget. He hated his fears. They were with him, vaguely enlivened by Josefina's talk.

It was not long before winter.

In the broken darkness of firelight, Julio lay awake and prayed until he was answered by the same thing that always answered prayers, the earliest voice he had been taught to recognize, which no one else had to hear — the voice of God Himself in his own

heart. Father Antonio made him know when he was a very little boy that the stronger a man was, the more he needed the guidance of God. So when he felt afraid and feeble alongside his mild strong brother, he had only to pray, and shut his eyes, and remember Jesus, who would presently come to him and say, 'I see you, Julio Garcia; it is all right. What is it?'

'The mountains, to the mountains,' thought Julio in answer to his own prayer.

*'Blessed is the fruit of thy womb: Jesus...'*

'What is in the mountains?'

*'...now and at the hour of our death.'*

'There is much that my brother and I can do in the mountains, and as soon as he awakens I will tell him; we will take my father's musket and go hunting; we will bring home skins to keep our little sister warm, and show our mother that this is a house of men, who do what is right, no matter how hard it is to do.'

*'Amen.'*

## II

Against the mica panes of the small deep window the early daylight showed like fog, silvery and chill. Luis jumped alive from sleep and went like a pale shadow to the dead fireplace, where he blew ashes off a few remote coals and, shivering in his bare skin, coaxed a fire alive. Then he found his clothes and got into them. He began to laugh at Julio, curled like a cat under the mountain-cat skins, waiting for warmth in the room. Then he thought with pleasure of the work to be done outside, in the marching dawn; cold mist over the river; the horses stirring; animals to feed and release. He went out, already owner of the day.

Julio was awake all that time; and he squinted at the fire, judging nicely just when it would need more wood, lest it go out; and just when the room would be comfortable. He was soon up, listening for sounds in the other room. Presently Josefina came

to make breakfast. She felt tragic in the cold morning, and her face drooped with pity for her heart which was abused.

‘I am going home,’ said she.

‘No, you can’t do that,’ said the boy.

She looked at him with sad delight in his concern.

‘Why can’t I? What do I get around here for my pains? I was freezing all night.’

‘When my father comes home he will pay you plenty. Luis and I can — we will bring you a glorious piece of fur.’

‘Oh, indeed; and where from?’

‘We are going to the mountains.’

‘A pair of fool children like you? Another thing for your poor mama to worry about! If she lives through the winter it will be very surprising.’

‘What do you mean?’

She had nothing to mean, and so she made it more impressive by quivering her great throat, a ridiculous gesture of melancholy.

Julio ran outside and found his brother. They did not greet each other, but fell into tasks together.

The sky was coming pale blue over the river, and pale gold edges of light began to show around the far mountain rims. The house looked like a lovely toy in the defining light, its edges gilded, its shadows dancing.

‘Luis.’

‘What?’

‘I have an idea.’

‘Well?’

‘Did you feel cold all night?’

‘No, but you would not lie still.’

‘I am sorry. I heard Josefina talking to Mama.’

‘The poor old cow.’

‘Do you realize that we are so poor that we haven’t got enough things to keep us warm, especially with the new baby here?’

And an extra woman in the house? — She ought to stay with us until Mama is well again.'

'What are you going to do about it?'

'You and I should take the musket and go to hunt cats in the mountains, and bring home enough furs to satisfy everybody.'

'Yes,' said Luis, without any surprise, 'I have thought of that, too.'

'Then I can go?'

'I suppose so — if you behave yourself. It's no child's errand, you know.'

'Of course not. Then will you tell Mama?'

'All right.'

Now the smoke was thick and sweet above the house.

The light spread grandly over the whole valley.

Luis went to his mother's bedside and leaned down. The baby was awake and obscurely busy against her mother's side.

'Mama.'

'My little Luis.'

'Julio and I are going to the mountains for a few days, to get some furs.'

'No, no, you are both too young! That little Julio is just a baby. Now, Luis, don't break my heart with any more troubles!'

'What troubles? We have no troubles!'

'Your father is gone, we have no money, my children shiver all night long, that Josefina is a fat crow, Father Antonio hasn't been near us since the baby was born.'

She wept easily and weakly. Luis was full of guilt, and ideas of flight. He leaned and kissed her cool forehead and laughed like a big man.

'You'll see. My brother and I will come back like merchant princes.'

'Then you are going?'

'Yes, Mummie, we'll go.'

She stared at him in a religious indignation. This was her son! So even sons grew up and went away and did what they wanted to do, in spite of all the things women could think of to keep them back!

Later Julio came to say good-bye, and she shamelessly wooed him to stay, with the name of God, and her love, and his pure dearness, and various coquettices. He felt a lump in his throat, so he shrugged, like his father, and went to the other room, where he paused and said, 'Thank you, Josefina, for staying until my brother and I get back.'

'The devil takes many odd forms,' said Josefina with a pout.

They had two horses and the musket which their father had left at home upon his last departure for Mexico. They had a rawhide pouch containing things to eat, loaves and chilies and dried meat. As soon as they were free of the little fields of home, Julio began to gallop; and Luis overtook him and, saying nothing, reached out for the halter and brought him down to a walk. Julio felt very much rebuked; he sat erect on his horse and squinted his eyes at the mountain rising so far ahead of them, and thought of himself as a relentless hunter.

The boys toiled over the land all morning.

They paused and looked back several times, touched by the change in the look of their farm, which lay now like a box or two on the floor of the valley; and they thought respectively, 'When I have my farm, I shall want to be on higher ground,' and 'What if something dreadful has happened since we left home! If the baby choked to death, or a robber came, I should never forgive myself.'

The mountains looked strangely smaller as they advanced. The foothills raised the riders up, and from various slopes the mountain crowns seemed to lean back and diminish. The blue air in cañons and on the far faces of rock slides and broken mighty shoulders was like a breath of mystery over the familiar facts of memory.

'Let me carry the musket now for a while.'

'No, we might as well decide that now. I am to have it all the time.'

'Why, that isn't right!'

'No, I have had more experience with it. It is our only arm. Now be sensible.'

'Just because I am the younger, you always do this way. I tell you, I am an excellent shot.'

'You may be. But I am nearly four years older, and — I just think it better this way.'

'I wish I'd known before we started.'

'Why don't you go back, then?'

'I will.'

But they rode on together. Easily triumphant, Luis could afford to be indulgent; later on he rode close to Julio and knocked him on the back and winked.

'You think I am not as much of a man as you are,' said Julio bitterly.

'Well, you're not.'

'You'll see! I can show you!'

The brothers' love for each other was equally warm, but derived from different wells of feeling. Sometimes they felt only the love; at other times, only the difference.

Now in afternoon, riding on the windy November plain, and knowing that before nightfall they would be in the very shadow of the nearest mountain reach, they felt their littleness on that world. The air was lighter so high up above the river valley. They looked back: an empire of sand-colored earth, and there, in the far light, the river herself, furred with trees. They looked ahead, but in doing that had to look up.

It was a crazy giant land; a rock that looked like a pebble from here was higher than a tree when they got to it.

'We must find a place to leave the horses.'

‘What?’

‘You idiot, we can’t expect horses to climb straight up cliffs like that over there!’

‘Sure, we’ll find a place to leave them.’

‘It must be nearly too late to go into the mountains tonight.’

‘We’ll make a fire here.’

‘If it is clear enough tonight, they could see our fire from home.’

‘They could?’

The thought made Julio shiver. But then it was already getting chill. The sun was going down.

### III

They awoke the next morning under the cold mountains, and in their rested souls there was a mood of gods. They caught their horses and rode along the last little flat before the great rise, and before the sun was up over the rocky shoulder they had found a little box cañon where there was a growth of straw-colored grass, and through which there washed a small creek. Leading the horses, they walked far into the narrow shadowy cañon and at last Luis said, ‘There!’

‘What?’

‘Here is the place to leave the animals. We can make a little fence down here, and then be safe when we go off to hunt.’

‘What will you build your fence with?’

‘Some big rocks and then a lot of branches that will seem high to the horses.’

‘Where does that river come from, do you suppose?’

‘If you’ll stop talking long enough to get to work, we’ll go and find out.’

The light of builders came into their eyes, measuring, devising; after a few trials they had a system for their work; they moved harmoniously. Given need, materials, and imagination, nothing

wanted. They grew warm, and threw down their coats. The sun quivered in watery brilliance high beyond the rocky crown.

When they were done, they untethered the horses and took up the food, the musket, the powder, balls, their knives, their tinder, and went up the cañon, following the creek. It led them into shadow; they had to wade; the rocks widened — sunlight ahead; then a miniature marsh with moss and creatures' tracks; then a little waterfall, which they heard, a whisper in diamond sunlight, before they saw it; and under it a black pool plumbed by the sun to its still, sandy floor.

The fall came down from a rocky ledge halfway up the face of a gray stone cliff.

The forest shadows beyond it, which they saw looking up, were hazy with sunlight and noon blue.

‘We’ll swim!’

The boys took off their clothes and fell into the water; for a moment they hated the cold shock, and then they were happily claimed by the animal world. They were away from everything. They were let to their senses. They dived and splashed and bellowed, awakening the silences to echo, which only tempest and beast had awakened before them. This was a bath of a superman; not the idle, slow, muddy, warm current of the Rio Grande, which suggested cows and babies paddling and hot mud drugging boys who swam in summer.

They came out into the warmer air and slapped until they were dry; then they dressed.

‘Up there — we’ve got to get up there somehow.’

Luis pointed up to the higher world beyond the fall. There were gigantic pines standing in light-failing ranks; and behind them a great plane of rock shaggy with its own breakage.

So they retreated from the waterfall and went around it, climbing and clawing until they had gained the upper level. They stood to listen. Enormous and pressing, the quiet of the

mountains surrounded them. Their eyes, so long limited to a tame river world, hunted ahead. They were explorers, so far as they knew. What no man has ever seen before! There was a mysterious sense of awe in the first eye that owned it.

As they passed in and out of shadow they felt alternately cold and warm.

As they went, they were often forced by the huge silence to stop and let their own sounds die away.

They would laugh at each other at such moments, and then go on.

In midafternoon they thought they must plan to go back, since it took them so long to come. The horses would need company and perhaps protection against beasts.

The sun was yellower and cooler.

The way they had come no longer looked the same; coming, they had watched another face of it; now, retreating, they had to look back often to recognize their course. They lost it, or thought they had, when they came to a bench of gray stone in a spill of light through branches. They then looked aside, and saw the ledge curve and vanish in a stout hillside, and emerge a little farther on and there become the rocky shelf over which rustled their waterfall of the sunny noon.

‘It is made by heaven for our purposes!’ said Luis.

‘Yes, it certainly is. — How do you mean?’

‘Well, the cats probably come and drink and lie here, and other animals. We could be here on this shelf, you see.’

‘And fire down on them?’

‘Sure. Come on.’

They started along the ledge and then shagged back and nearly fell down to the cañon floor below when a boom of air and shock arose and smote them from a few feet ahead. It was the thunder of a great bald eagle who beat his way off the rocks and straight up over them, his claws hanging down, his hot red eyes sparkling

for one tiny second in the light of the sky. Then he wheeled and raised his claws and extended his head and drifted off in a long slanting line like the descent of the mountain edge over which he vanished.

The boys were breathless.

It scared them.

It also hushed them — the grandeur of that heavy bird leaving earth for air.

'How I should love to get a bird like that!'

'To kill him?'

'Or at least get some of his feathers.'

'Maybe he dropped some.'

Julio moved forward and then crouched and called for his brother.

'Luis, look! Hurry! Here is what he had!'

They were looking at a partially picked mountain-lion cub, off which the eagle had been feeding.

'Julio, you see, now? Here is where the big cats will come. They will roam until they find it, and they will watch. The eagle carried off the baby cat. He'll come back, too!'

Julio acted like a very small boy. He kicked the carcass of the cub off the ledge into the shaly slide below.

'What did you do that for?'

'I don't know.'

'It was wonderful bait! Now it's gone!'

'Well...'

'Oh, come on!'

The godlike temper and power of the day were gone for them both — Luis exasperated, Julio tired and guilty.

As they went down to the cañon where the waterfall seemed to stand, not fall, in a mist of blue shadow now that the sun was sinking, they looked up, and saw the eagle so high that he seemed like a spiraling leaf, and Luis shrugged and said, 'Oh, cheer up!

I suppose he would have come back anyway and carried his supper off!'

But Luis, though he was again friendly, could not offset the chilling of the whole day; and the rocky clear cold cupping of night in those walled places closed over Julio and confirmed his hunger, his bitterness, his youthful rue at the turn of happiness into misery, like the turn of day into dusk.

All right, if everybody was older than he was, let them parade and give orders. If Luis felt so superior, Julio would show him some day.

They scampered down the cañon as fast as they could, for where they had left the horses was like a station of home to them.

When it was dark enough, they looked for stars, and saw some, but clouds had come, and a damp, warmish wind, and the cañon talked in wind, trees keening, and now and then an almost silent thunder of a wind-blow when it met a distant high rock mountain-face.

By the last light of their fire, Luis examined his musket, to see that the day's toil over hard ground hadn't damaged it any.

'Let me see it,' said Julio.

'What for?'

'Oh, can't I just *see* it?'

Luis handed it over.

Julio sighted along the barrel.

'She's a lovely one,' he murmured. Then he gave it back, ready to go to sleep, chuckling with affection for Luis, who would be so surprised.

#### IV

Dawn came with a ghostly diffusion of misty light — the slow march of shapes.

Julio was ready.

He rolled with almost infinite slowness to the ground, free of the

blankets, and left Luis slumbering like a mummy who knew the cold of centuries.

He crouched and slowly went around the other side of the bed, and took up the musket and ammunition from the side of his brother.

He sniffed the air, and it was bitter-sweet with cold and some drifting new flavor.

He didn't know, in his excitement and caution, that it was the presage of snow.

He went up the cañon chewing on a hank of jerked meat from his pocket. He was abroad in his own wilderness, with his own gun; in effect, with his own destiny. He remembered yesterday's trail very well, and he toiled while the light grew; yet, there being no sun, everything had a new look, though he had seen it before. He came after a long time to the pool and waterfall. There he stopped and looked back. Now he realized how far it was; how many hours divided him from Luis, who must have been awake and wondering hours ago.

What would Luis do?

Would he kick the hard ground in fury, and halloo for him? Or would he set out in pursuit?

But which way would Luis decide to go?

Or perhaps he was weeping at the conviction that his beautiful young brother Julio had been carried off in the night by beasts of prey.

Then the image of a devouring lion shouldering a musket was too odd, and Julio laughed; then he smartly turned to see where another's laugh came from; then he laughed again, at his echo in the rocky room with the sky roof.

The waterfall was like a wraith made of heavier air than the gray essence that filled the intimate little cañon.

'The cats will come to the ledge,' thought Julio, faithful to his brother's wisdom, even though he outraged it.

He went around the long way, slowly going across the fat roll of the rocky hillside, and found himself then in the tall forest up there. He knew that a hunter must wait; so he settled himself to do so on a tiled shelf of moss, between two big boulders, lacy with fern and dark with shadow.

His stomach was clutched by doubts and partly whetted hunger. Hardest of all was to keep the silence of the mountains, lest he startle his game.

Many times he was ready to get up, relieve the ache of his set legs, go back to Luis and pretend that he had only wandered a few feet away from camp.

But he was afraid now. He was afraid of the way the sky looked, dark and soft, and wind very high up which pulled the clouds past the peaks as if tearing gray cloth on the sharp edges.

He was lost, really.

The musket was a heavy sin across his lap. It was loaded. Perhaps he should unload it and scamper back.

But then, if a mountain cat came to the ledge, he would be helpless.

Then he remembered for the first time that he might be in danger from the animals. It sent blood back through him, and he grew angry at such menace.

'If they think they can hurt me, they are crazy, those wildcats!'

So he spent the early day and noon in thoughts of himself and his furies, while the peace of the forest was held, and the sky now came down in darkness and again blew upward in windy lets of silvery light.

And he stayed, watching.

He was so alone and silent that the first touch on his cheek out of the air startled him, and he turned his head quickly to look; but what had touched his cheek was the snow, shortly after noon.

It came down, dandled by the odd currents of airy wind in the

irregular mountains, like white dust sifting through the ancient stand of trees up the mountainside.

Julio blinked at the spotty snow falling before his eyes, and he licked the delicious flakes that starred his lips.

The rocks were beginning to look white. The air was white, and the distance was white.

The distance was reduced. When he tried to peer as far as he would, his sight seemed to go so far and then turn black.

All suddenly, a most childish wave of lonesomeness broke over him, and he knew how far away he was, and how solitary; how subject to the mountains.

He got up.

Something else moved, too, in the whitening world.

He saw it, obscurely dark against the white stone shelf below him in line of sight. It was a mountain lion coming down the ledge with beautiful stillness and almost the touch of snow in its own paws.

Its heart-shaped nose was along the ground, smelling the fresh snow and whatever it covered.

Julio lifted the gun, which was as light as he wanted it in this moment, and watched, and licked the snow off his upper lip. Then, with his eyes wide-open and his cheeks blown up, he fired.

He couldn't hear the lion cry, or the echo of the amazing blast through the cañons and the aisles. He was deaf from it. But he sat down behind his rock and watched while he reloaded, and saw the cat spilling its blood on the snow; and then gradually he could hear it moaning as his head cleared. Then it suddenly died. The snow continued on it passively, cooling the blood, and making it pale, and finally thickening over it entirely.

After a long time Julio came down from his rock and touched his game.

He glanced around to see if any more cats happened to be there. There were none. He was exalted and indifferent. He rolled the

heavy lion off the ledge down to the sloping hillside below it. There the snow was thinner. There he set to work to skin the cat, as he had watched his father skin animals at home, for leather, for fur, for rawhide.

## v

His knife was so wet and cold that it tried to stick to his hands. He was late in finishing. He felt proud.

Maybe Luis would be annoyed, but not for long. To bring home the first fur? He had a loving warm tender heart for all animals, now that he had conquered one of the greatest. He felt that animals must love men in return, and serve them humbly.

Done, then, he returned to thoughts of others, and then he could have groaned aloud when he really imagined what Luis might feel.

'Do you suppose my brother is in danger because I took away his gun? What if he has been attacked? What if I had not had the gun when the lion came? It would be the same with him, without any protection! Oh, my Jesus and my God, help me to get back in a hurry, and have him safe when I get there!'

Now, with heavying snow and night beginning to fall, the hunter could not scramble fast enough to undo what his day had done.

He shouldered his new skin, which was freezing and heavy, and his gun and his supplies, and went down off the shaly hill. In the bottom of the chasm, where the waterfall entered the stream, it was dark. The black water of the creek alone was clearly visible. He stopped and called out, then turned to listen, but the spiraling flaky darkness was vastly quiet.

He hurried on and sobbed a few times, but he said to himself that it was simply that he was cold, not that he was sorely afraid and sorry.

'Certainly I can see!'

But he paid for this lie when he struck a rock that cut his cheek and threw him down to the ground, where the soft copious snowfall went on secretly to change the mountains, to enrich stony hollows with soft concavities, to stand the bare ridges barer above snowy articulations.

He struggled to make a small fire, scratching twigs and needles and branches from the lee side of rocks, having to feel for his wants. At last he produced a flame, and his heart leaped up, the firelight on the snow was so lovely. In the light he saw where he was, and collected more branches, building craftily to bring up his flames, until the cañon was roaring with light and heat at that spot.

He sat, then lay on his new fur, with the raw side down.

The snowflakes made a tiny, fascinating little hiss of death when they fell into the fire.

‘Luis will be all right. I will get to him early in the morning; as soon as it is light I shall start out.’

He dozed and awoke, at last to see his fire gone. Then he knew he must stay awake.

What he knew next was so strange that he felt humble. In spite of trying not to, he had fallen asleep, and was then awakened afterward by wave after wave of sound, through the falling, falling snow which hushed everything but this clamor that had awakened him, the ringing of a bell. The bell clanged and stammered and changed with the wind; like the bell of the church at home, miles up the valley on a still hot summer Sunday morning.

‘But this is not — there can be no church in these mountains!’ he said in the blackest density of the snowfall that night. And he listened again, but now heard nothing — nothing beyond the faint sense of hushing in the air made by the falling snow.

The bell was gone; it had served to awaken him; somewhere beyond this cold separating fall, it had rung out for him — true, even if it came to him as a dream of security. He did not lie down again; but sat, marveling, and sick for home.

## VI

The snow continued with daybreak.

He set out again as soon as he could see a few feet in front of him. As the light grew, so did his sense of folly. It was as if he had dreamed of the things that might happen to his brother Luis.

All his greatness of accomplishment disappeared. What good was this smelling and frozen catskin now? He threw it down by an icy rock and found that he could now run, trotting, without the awkward burden of the cat hide, which was stiff and slippery — with its frozen leggings of fur which stuck out, ragged and indignant, the congealed ghost of the cat.

The snow died away as Julio hurried. The wind became capricious and bitter. It scratched in long sweeps down the cañon and bore out over the open plains, which Julio could begin to see as the day grew and he toiled farther down the shadowy chasm.

He kept staring ahead for sight of the spare pines which stood by their camp. He remembered seeing the pines against open sky the first night there — which meant that they were nearly out of the mountain's fold.

He thought he saw the sentinel trees once; broke into a hard run; and then stopped, panting, when he saw that the gray light on a wall of rock had looked for a moment like a misty sky out there over the plain.

The musket was heavy and cold in his grasp. He had it still loaded. Perhaps he ought to shoot it off, a signal for his brother?

But he would call first.

He cried out, and stood to listen, his whole body turned sideways to hear an answer.

There was none.

Now he knew that the bell he had heard last night, waking him up during the snowstorm, was a miracle, sent to keep him from freezing to death in his sleep.

So he began to run again, and his heart nearly burst. He

thought perhaps there would be another miracle, to keep Luis safe and bring Julio back to him right away.

The boy crawled over the rocks that seemed cold enough to crack in the weather; he waded where he had to in the glazed creek. Suddenly it was lighter; the sky lay before him as well as above him; and at last he looked down on the miniature meadow of the cañon mouth where the horses were fenced. There! Yes, there were the guardian pine trees.

‘Luis, Luis, I am back!’ he cried, but he choked and made only a sobbing sound. There was no fire burning at the camp, and Julio was thumped in the breast by fear again, as if Luis had gone back home with the two horses and left him as he deserved to be left, alone in the mountains.

He hurried and then saw the horses, far down the way.

Then he heard a voice, talking to him from a distance; no words; level, careful sounds; it sounded like Luis.

‘Luis, where are you?’

Julio came down farther.

He squinted around, and then upward.

‘I am glad to see you back. Stop where you are!’

‘Luis!’

‘Be careful.’

At the same moment, Julio heard how Luis spoke from the tree where he was hanging and he saw the wolf at the base of the tree, which sat staring upward, perfectly quiet and ready.

The wolf was huge and looked like a dog, except that he was gray, the color of rock — which was why Julio didn’t see him for the first little while.

The wolf must have heard him, for his ears were standing up and the fur on his spine was silvery and alive. Julio stood shocking-still and was perfectly sure that the wolf’s eyes were straining toward him as far as they could without the turn of the head; and the animal was ready to turn and attack him if necessary.

So there was a grotesque interval of calm and silence in the cañon.

Luis was hanging to the pine tree, which had a few tough fragments of branch about sixteen feet above the ground.

The sun tried to shine through the bitter and cloudy day.

Luis looked white and sick, half-frozen; his eyes were burning black in new hollow shadows.

‘Julio,’ said Luis, as lightly as possible, never taking his eyes off the wolf; indeed, as if he were addressing the wolf.

‘Yes, Luis,’ whispered Julio.

‘You have the gun there with you, haven’t you?’ asked the older brother, in an ingratiating and mollifying tone, to keep the wolf below him still intent upon his first design.

‘Yes, Luis.’

‘Well, Julio,’ said his brother with desperate charm, velvet-voiced and easy, ‘see if you can load it without making much disturbance, will you?’

‘It is loaded, Luis.’

‘Oh, that is fine. Then, Julio, pray Jesus you can manage to shoot the wolf. Julio, be easy and steady now . . . don’t — move — fast — or — make — any — noise — Julio — for — the — love — of — God.’

To Julio it was like coming back to the reward of his folly. He held his breath, to be quiet.

He thought Luis was going to fall from the tree — his face was so white and starving, his hands so bony and desperate where they clutched.

‘Why, of course I can shoot the terrible wolf,’ said Julio to himself; slowly, slowly bringing the musket around to the aim.

Luis, from his tree against the gray pale sky, went on talking in tones of enchantment and courtesy to the wolf, to keep alive the concentration, until Julio fancied the wolf might answer, as animals did in the tales of early childhood.

'We shall see, my dear friend wolf, just sit there — one — more — minute — if you please — until — my — brother gets the thing ready.... Are — you — ready — Julio ...'

The answer was the shot.

The wolf lashed his hindquarters around so that he faced Julio, whence the sound had come.

He roared and spat; but he could not move. His back was broken. He sat and barked and snapped his teeth.

Julio ran a little way forward, then was cautious. He stopped and began to reload.

Luis fell to the ground. He had his knife ready.

But he could not move as quickly as he would. He was cold and stiff and cramped. He hacked his knife into the animal's breast, but the stab was shy and glancing. The wolf made a crying effort and scabbled its shattered body forward and took Luis by the leg.

'Now, Julio! Your knife!'

Julio dropped the musket and came down to them.

'Where, Luis?'

'Under his left forearm!'

'Wolf!' said Julio, and drove his knife.

## VII

For a moment they all stayed where they were — the brothers panting; the animal dead, and slowly relaxing thus. The brothers sweated and couldn't speak, but hung their heads and spat dry spit and coughed and panted.

'Did he bite you bad?' asked Julio.

'No, he couldn't bite very hard, not even like a dog — he was too hurt.'

'Let me see.'

They peeled the cloth away from the leg just above the knee. The teeth had torn the cloth and the flesh. It did not hurt. It was numb. It bled very little. The skin was blue.

There was nothing to do to the leg except cover it again. They took as long as possible at it, but they had presently to come to the story of the young brother's folly, and as soon as that was done they felt elated — the one penitent and grave, the other pardoning and aware that the terrors of the experience were more useful to his young brother than any words of rebuke.

'... And I know right where I left the lion skin; we'll get it later! We can get many more!'

Julio was ballooning with relief, now that it was all over and done with. He felt as he always felt after confession in church — airy and tall.

The physical misery in snow and wind and rocky mountain temper — this was their outer penalty. But the boys knew an inner joy at the further range of their doing. Simply being where they were, at odds with what menaced them — this was achievement; it was man's doing done.

Late that day the sun did break through and a little while of golden light seemed to relieve the cold. It didn't snow again that night. They kept their fire high. Luis was, oddly, too lame to walk. But he was glad to lie and watch the flames, and smile at Julio's serious bearing, full of thoughtful play in his face which meant plans and intentions.

## VIII

The day after the snowstorm the valley itself came back in a kind of golden resurge of autumn. The house at the little farm was soaked with melting snow; running lines of dark muddy thaw streaked from the round-worn edges of the roof to the walls and the ground.

The temper of the river was warmer than the mountain weather. The willows and cottonwoods lost their snow by noon. The mountains were visible again, after the day of the blind white blowing curtain over the plain.

Not many travelers were abroad; but Father Antonio came down the road shortly after noon, and Josefina saw him, his fat white mare, his robe tucked above his waist, his wool-colored homespun trousers, and his Mexican boots. She went to tell Rosa that the priest was coming at last, and to stop crying, if that was all she was crying for.

The priest dismounted in the yard and let his horse move.

Josefina tidied herself in honor of the visit, and he came in, catching her at wetting her eyebrows. She immediately felt like a fool, from the way he looked at her; and she bowed for his blessing, furious at his kind of power over and against women.

'I didn't get your message about the baby until two days ago, and then I said nothing could keep me from coming as soon as I could. Isn't it fine! Where is he? Or is it a girl? I hope you have a girl. Already those bad boys of yours — where are they?'

Rosa felt as if authority had walked into her house and that she need have no further fear.

Father Antonio was a tall, very spare, bony man nearly fifty, with straw-colored hair, a pale wind-pinked face, and little blue eyes that shone speculatively as he gazed. He was awkward; he couldn't talk without slowly waving his great-knuckled hands in illustration of his mood; and he loved to talk, putting into words the great interest of his days. Everything suggested something else to him; he debated with himself as if he were two Jesuits, they said in Santa Fé, where he was not popular with the clergy because he preferred working in the open land among the scattered families of the river basin.

'Where are the boys?' he asked.

Rosa was at peace. Her cheeks dried and her heart seemed to grow strong. She felt a spell of calm strong breath in her breast. She was proud.

'They have gone hunting. They have been gone several days now. In the mountains.'

Josefina lingered on the outside of a kind of sanctuary which the priest and the mother made, a spiritual confine which she could not enter, a profane and resentful woman. But she could toss her opinions into it.

'They are little fools, a pair of chicken-boned infants, crazy, going to the mountains! It snowed there for two days. They will never come back.'

Rosa watched the priest's face, ready to be frightened or not, by his expression.

He glanced at Josefina, a mild blue fire.

'They are probably all right.'

Josefina mumbled.

'How will a man ever know what goes on,' asked Father Antonio, 'unless he goes out and looks at it?'

'How long can you stay, Father?' asked Rosa.

'Till we christen the baby.'

'But —'

'I'll wait till the brothers come back, so the baby will have a godfather.'

'I — godmother,' simpered Josefina on the outskirts, making a fat and radiant gesture of coquetry.

'Why not?' said the priest mildly, taking the sting out of her scandalous contempt.

It sobered her. She blushed.

'When your husband comes back in the spring with the wagon train,' said Father Antonio, 'you can send some money to my church.'

'Gladly,' said Rosa.

'Those must be big boys by now. I haven't seen them for months. Luis? Julio? That's right. When I was a boy I had all the desires to go and look at what was over the mountains. Then when I was away, there, in Mexico, at the seminary, the world on this side of the mountains was just as inviting and mysterious.'

Eh? When I came back to go to work, everybody bowed to me, and behaved properly as to a priest. But I always felt a little guilty for that, and went fishing or hunting. The animals had no respect for me, which was a relief, for they knew not of God, whose weight is something to carry, I can tell you!'

This was strange talk to the women.

'Next to catching a sinner and taking away his sin, I like best to fetch a trout, or play a long game of war with a beaver in the river pools. So now I know why your two big brown babies went off to the mountains.'

'Oh,' thought the women. 'That explains it.'

## IX

Father Antonio stayed over a week. The boys were missing. The priest would go and look at the mountains in all times of day, to see if he could see anything, even in his mind, which might be played with as news for the distracted mother.

But all he saw were the momentous faces of the mountains; light or the absence of light; at dawn, a chalky black atmosphere quivering with quiet air; at noon, silvered by the sun, the great rock wrinkles shining and constant; at evening, the glow of rose, as if there were furnaces within the tumbled stone which heated the surface, until it came to glow for a few moments, then cooling to ashy black from the base upward until it joined the darkening sky like a low heavy cloud.

'I have promised to stay for them, and I will,' said the priest.

He spent the days making Rosa agree to get strong; until she finally arose from her bed and ordered her house again. He did the tasks of the outdoors. There was no need for Josefina to stay now; but stay she did, touched in her vanity by the godmotherhood which had been mentioned once.

She came in one day, still holding her arm over her eyes, as if staring into the distance, the golden chill of the open winter.

'I think I see them coming!' she cried.

They all went outdoors.

'You are crazy,' said the priest.

They looked and looked.

The plain and the slow rise into the mountain-lift were swimming with sunlight. They searched with long looks until they had to blink for vision.

'See! Like a couple of sheep, just barely moving?' insisted Josefina, pointing vaguely at the mountains.

'Where?'

'Yes, I do see! She is right! She must have Indian blood.'

The mother was the last to see and agree.

There was an infinitesimal movement far on the plain, hardly perceptible as movement; some energy of presence, a fall of light and cast of shadow, just alive enough to be convincing. It was the hunters, coming on their horses on the second day's journey out of the mountains.

Late in the afternoon they arrived.

The marks of their toil were all over them.

To go and come back! This being the common mystery of all journeying, the mother could hardly wait for them to speak; to tell her everything.

She brought the baby and the boys kissed the tiny furred head.

The priest gave them his blessing and they bent their shaggy necks under it.

Josefina stared and then squinted at them, whispering something.

'Luis, you are hurt!'

'Not any more.'

'But you *were!*'

'I will tell you sometime.'

'Now, now!'

'How long have we been away?'

'Ten days!'

The boys talked, confirming each other with looks.

Luis and the wolf; the bite; the fever; the body as the residence of the devil, and the raving nights. Julio and his amazing skill as a marksman; his reckless courage; the two of them together after Luis's recovery; shagging up and down rocky barriers, mountain sprites, and their bag of skins.

'Look at that!'

They got and opened out their two packs of furs, and there were cats, the wolf, a little deer, and a middle-sized brown bear.

'Who got the bear?'

'Luis! It was wonderful! The bear was in a tree, watching us, and what made him nobody knows, but Luis looked up, and *whang!* and *boo!* Down fell the bear, and all it took was the one shot!'

'But you should have seen Julio the time he saved my life, when the wolf was waiting for me to fall down, I was so cold and weak! Up in my tree!'

The silence was full of worried love: what had they not done! But safe. Yes, but — what if —!

The brothers looked at each other.

Nothing would ever be said about the other thing. Nobody ever managed to grow up without being foolish at some time or other.

The priest thought, 'The boy Julio looks taller. I suppose it is only natural; last time I was here he was ——'

Luis took the baby sister to hold.

There was plenty of fur to keep her warm.

Julio sighed. It was a curiously contented and old man's comment.

Father Antonio felt like laughing; but there was some nobility of bearing in Julio's little mighty shoulders that did not deserve genial patronizing.

The priest glanced at Josefina. He knew his materials like a craftsman. He thought, 'Josefina sees — she even smells as a female — what has taken place in Julio. She stares at him and then squints and whispers to herself. How little is secret! How much makes a life!'

The mother's arms were free of her infant. She went and hugged Julio, because, though she hardly thought it so clearly, she knew that he had gone and conquered the wilderness which was his brother's by birth. She knew that — and what lay behind it — as only a child's mother could know it; with defensive and pitying and pardoning love, so long as it might be needed.

## x

'I wish I could write, now,' said Luis.

'Why?'

'Then I would write to my father about it.'

'But he could not read it.'

'No, but he could get somebody to read it to him.'

'Should I write and tell him about it for you?' asked Father Antonio.

'Oh, if you would, Father!'

'I'll be glad to — the minute I get back to my house where I have pens and paper. You have told me the whole adventure.'

But when the priest did return home, and sit down to keep his promise to the delighted brothers, what they had told him seemed to him man's story, and all he finally wrote was:

Dear Garcia:

Your wife has had a dear baby girl, and both are well and happy, with God's grace. Your two sons are proud of their family, and when you return, before hearing from their lips anything of their adventures during your absence, you will see that they are already proper men, for which God be praised in the perfection of His design for our mortal life.

## TRUE BELIEVER<sup>1</sup>

BY MADGE JENISON

**S**HE was a peasant woman living a mile out of Arles to the northwest. She was sixty years old. She had married, had children. She was of middle height, her bones showing everywhere in her frame. Her enormous hands and feet seemed points at which she was held to the earth and her acts, as the roots of a tree hold by their pull. She lived alone on a farm of five fields in a house of the country, of rubble and stone whitewashed. On the windward side a row of cypress trees stood against the mistral. The red-tiled roof of faded pink that was rose and orange that was rose took in the light because the tiles were grooved, purple, green, and red. Her husband had left her five years before. He had gone away on a wagon passing their lane and she had never heard of him since. Everything on the farm was a muddle and failure when he went, and she had brought order and honor into it. She had cleaned up and husbanded it field by field, fence by fence, season by season.

When her husband left she was without money and so she went to clean at a big house in Arles. The cook told her of some talk the butler brought down from the table. She meditated on what this woman said and she had begun to raise very choice truffles

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by Harper & Brothers.

which had before been only hunted in the forest by hogs trained to nose them out. She made excellent cheese and rye bread, the native brandy, and a conserve of lemon. She made the special wine of the country of pale rose — *vin rosé* — a first pressing with great flavor of the grape. She kept goats and geese and had a good breed of French poultry. She had bought a cow. A cow was a rarity in the district, and she had an assured and lavish public for her butter.

Fine people had begun to come in to the Provence, establishing themselves on the old neighborhood properties, and much money was being spent. She took to the great houses in her cart her bottles and pots, grapes laid between damp leaves, green almonds, figs, and a full-bodied fragrant apricot which grew on espaliers on the south walls of her house and barn. She took everything late in the afternoon, so that her wares went almost from her vines and furrows to the tables of her customers.

She was very solitary. Her husband had brutalized her sons, and as soon as each was old enough he had gone away. She seemed to be an abstraction of woman, as if it were probable that hers was a character of only two or three masses, with only two or three shapes within it — day night, work sleep, sowing harvest, order disorder, clean not clean. She did only two or three things; and she thought only two or three things — to sow, reap, store, and prosper. In the mornings she would stake her herd of goats out in the open country and go after them at evening. All day she went from field to field, trellis to trellis, alone against the landscape. At night she drank big bowls of goat's milk or soup and ate hunks of black bread and went to bed.

All the marked events of this woman's life were part of the earth. She had a relation to the great logical and organic nature of matter, by which peat goes over into carbon, carbon into diamond, children are born, and the soil opens and yields. Her life was on a planetary scale where the landscape, made of sky,

the earth fat with oils strong and fierce, the mistral, the river, were the events. She was not outside all that but part of the great thing, as if she were only blocked from it and not yet wholly emerged.

The Rhone very shallow here, rushes up the earth and carries down boulders, so that the whole of the wild, white Camargue is coated with rubble for thirty miles and rotten with rock. The unfenced tremendous stony plain, the huge scene desolate, bold and grand, with salty plants that grow low over it, were something to which she was related as on the mother's side. Standing in the middle of a field sometimes with arms folded across her breast, looking about, she did not exactly worship, but she had a bodily sense of what was there around her, as if she passed her hand over the entire universe. Of all the year the strong cold winter evenings were the time she liked the best. This is the time when the ground makes its liquors. The spring was just under there. It was not gone but was ready to issue again. A little warmth, a tilt of some cup, it would come up through the ground along the roots, in fire. When she went with her lantern to break the ice in the pond for the geese to get their water, as the winter dusk came on, she partook of something, and made obeisance and received a vision.

Along the north end of her home pasture there was a rolling slope of land. The road to Arles curved here round this low hill and a clump of lombardies. This roll of the earth and bend of road and clump of trees was something she liked — the way the lombardies bent in the wind and went into a repeat forming one whole with her field and the road. She often looked at this place. It was not a slope nor a bend alone. There was something firm and heavy here that she wanted. Her eye would run along it and she would seem to lay her arm down on it and fit it into her elbow. She did not merely look at this place. It involved her. Solidity was always something in which she was involved. She

dreamed one night that she had hands so big that she could reach out and they would cover the hills.

She owned from Bella, the cow she had bought, a herd of four. Her cattle had for her something the earth, the sky, and river did not hold. She would take a variety of connections with a cow, its hulk and stoniness, so much to hang on, projections. When the herd moved away from you, as they would step together in a line, they were a single flow, and she noticed that always. As they wound slowly down in the winter afternoons, into the long whitewashed barn with bulging roof and windows under the eaves and the dovecote on top, with each little bell making a pattern, she saw them in great triangular blocks. Striding after them and lifting the big buckets of water for them, some natureness and some bulk enclosed in the bony body of a cow was perfectly clear to her. Without words, passing her hand across the back of her neck, she comprehended it and partook of it. Little calves and colts, in spite of their tiny unsteady legs, were now what they would become to her — they were power in the large. They could get up and walk away almost as soon as they were born. She always stopped to watch the wild white Camargue horses, those stallions running free like flames, flying over the hills against the so-joyous blue sky. They were part of what she knew. She went when she was able to the Crau to see the polished black bulls raised there for the bullfights.

There was something else. When she walked into Arles to church, before she went into the ancient Romanesque cathedral, she would stand close to the sides of the porch, looking up at spaces covered by scenes from the Bible. They were not stories to her of Jezebel, Tobit, the kiss of Judas, the people of Israel crossing the Red Sea. They were not stories nor stones. The way they came out of the wall arrested her. Heights and depths in seeing the world she knew. But these were higher and deeper by some trick that was left on her eyeballs. She always stopped

before the panels which divided the Evangelists from the Saints, and looked along the friezes, tier on tier of shape, volume laid against volume, reason against reason. Over Saint Andrew three horses' heads were pressed close before one another solidly, and she always lingered at this detail of the portal.

She had scarcely any relation to Jesus or Mary. But her relation to the portal was active, heavy, and concrete. When she went in and took the sacrament it was really the portal she was taking. Before the eyes of her bowed head, into that kneeling woman came not the blood of the Pascal Lamb, but the richness of the nature of form of three horses flying before a mistral of 1086. In fact, she liked the cathedral best when there was no service, and she could consider undistracted, if such a word may be used, what she saw. Sometimes she walked in the cloisters or along the boulevard of Roman or Merovingian tombs. She had a natural relation to what men far away in the first, sixth, and eleventh centuries had taken from that stone and left there. They had been part of the church they had made, and she too was an actual integral part of it as she stood there as much as one of its own shadows.

She thought with her body, and would stand close to the figure or vine she liked best on the baptismal font or the cornice. She would touch what she could reach and run her thumb along it. She liked shapes. Touch was what made reality to her. The world was a thing you touched. She had touched her children. She had put her hand on her baby's head to feel the way the hair grows, and on Bella's nozzle to feel the way the fur went in two directions. She would take up her lemons and onions and roll them in her hand. She knew that they were round far more than she knew that they were sour or savory. They were real by her standard not by their color and taste but when she touched them.

There was a painting over the high altar of Saint Trophime, a

stable where the Infant lay, and a cow was eating from the manger. But it was a flat smoke cow without bulk, almost a vapor, no size, no weight, and she seldom looked at it. She never thought in line. Everything was solid to her or it was not solid. The profundity of existence for her was in the bulk and body of things. The reality of the geese was the way they stood out against the water of the pond in the hollow. The shadow from the door of the old grain barn falling on the straw, the sunlight and shadow when sun came in at the low window of the spring house, were solid to her as the timbers that supported them; and this solidity was something that happened to her. She had partaken of the profound and primal seeking toward form that there is in every process of the world. Even the rustle of the corn was form that reached her as a whole, and the ducks that flew over her head, wheeling in a circle toward the north, reached her as a whole. When the dry mistral went through the narrow cobbled streets of Arles like an arrow it swept up a swinging center of rubbish. She always noticed that it was round.

One February morning as she went down to her fields at four-thirty an unusual circumstance arrested her. In a corner of one of them she saw a man sitting with a board propped up in front of him. He was putting on it something which seemed a matter of great haste and necessity. She crossed the field and stood looking over his arm watching what he did. He was making her cows as they came down behind her against the shoulder of the slope. Except for the whitewash of the country spread on the stone of houses and barns, the Virgin and Child over the altar, and the Mater Dolorosas and Trinities in the chapels of Saint Trophime, painting was unknown to her. But she had seen oil and her mind fumbled with this combination of colored whitewash with something thick which produced Bella and her field, in a way that looked like a field. She looked at the board on this man's thumb with its squeezed rank of colors and she smelled

the tube he had laid down, trying to penetrate this matter with her body.

The man had a wild, unnatural face full of cheekbone with eyebrows of red grass. The wide-mouthed gaping ears were those of a striped clown. One eye feared you before it looked. Indrawn, suffering, it seemed to be begging you to wait, to be merciful. The other in the shadow was bold and cool. It gazed upon you with a disconcerting aggression, taking from you all you had. It was like being looked at by all the power and grief and interest of life to be looked at by Van Gogh.

She had no way to think about suffering. This man was almost as much the landscape to her as a barn was. But when he turned his head she saw a prominence under his look. A bold man, very strong. She knew gentleness and bad blood in animals. One eye of this man had the steely look of her great boar. But the other eye was like the horse that always greeted her with a little neigh and lowering of the head. She was not afraid of the boar but she closed with it always warily, watchful of her mastery.

At noon she went back to see what he was doing. He was making another drawing of Bella in a notebook, a few lines before the brigade of her almond trees marching up the slope sugared with green, throwing their strength every way over the meadow with a flying light low on it. The painting he had made in the morning he had thrown down on the ground.

When she returned from the work of the day at seven he was gone. But she saw the canvas of her cow and the swell of her home pasture lying in the corner of the field where he had thrown it. She picked it up and took it home. Her first reaction was that of French thrift. She would clean the copper pans with this strong piece of cloth. But when she looked at it as she walked on something ran along her back. He had painted the drama of sky which had been about her all day — that whitest white of clouds building as if they loved their own form, so tangible, more white,

more delicate than white of egg. This was something she had already seen, only she had never hitherto seen it so much. She saw it enlarged as if she saw it now three times. She stared at this landscape, red as a hen's comb, yellow as a goose's bill, with the mighty force there which can drive bean shoots and rye out of the ground and push up tons of water. The surface of the canvas was cut under and lifted up, like the slope itself and the way the horses came forward from the portal of Saint Trophime. A smile appeared on her face, half drowsy and half sated. Here was something she liked as she liked the slope and the porch.

The next morning when she went down to her fields she saw that this man had already come. She crossed the field at noon and stood by him again. She had brought him a pot of goat's milk in return for the red of a hen's comb and yellow of a goose's bill, and she set it down saying nothing, with the caution of the provincial which never lets you know that it has been struck. It surprised her when she looked over his shoulder that what he was doing was so different from yesterday. She looked hard at this Bella. It was the Bella she milked and fed with good grain. Because the need of talk was very great for him and he was quick to make a mental relationship, he began to talk to her when he had finished the pot of milk.

'Things are happening up there, Mother,' he said looking up at the sky. 'The very heart of France is beating here.' He began to work at once. It had snowed for two days after he came, he told her, and there was much to paint.

Looking at the blot of shadow on the ground, watching him pour out of himself buckets of yellow into the shadow under Bella, she shook her head.

'It's yellower,' she said. She simply uttered her thought. He was saying something that was not true and she put it right as she would put right a grapevine that made a mistake. He looked at her with surprise, picked up his field book and one of the

crayons in the box beside him, and gave them to her, half bemused with the idea that she saw something he could not see. But they did not mean to her — Draw. She shook her head.

She was sowing the spring sowing every day, and the third day as she was going up and down, throwing the grain across with the full reach of her stride and her arm, she noticed this man there again. When she took him milk at noon she saw that he had put her into his study. She was there, planted in her land, sunk into it, sunk into her field, swinging her arm with the throw to get the right amount of distribution. Drawing his stool a little away from her, he asked her to stand still, and she consented, passing her hand round her neck, taking off her hat, and assuming the look of a headstone.

She began to take him milk every day. He tried to talk to her always when she came. His only connection with her was a railroad timetable which had landed him in that section of the earth, and that he happened to see in her field a cow with green under its nose. But since he was a man of sensibility, he saw at once that she deeply gave back an attention that was not without but within her. She scarcely ever spoke. In many days she said only 'Yes,' 'No,' and 'What?' Her entire relation to others consisted, it seemed, of these three words. But once she had said, 'It's yellower.'

She had noticed as if she saw them with her hand the way a cow is hung on the front and back and falls away right through the middle. In the fields before the young were cast the big bulk was without shape and became part of the whole landscape, and afterward she had a sense of separation in Bella or Franchonette as if each were there an individual. One day when she looked over his shoulder she shook her head and said "No" so that the word "No" seemed something that locked behind you. She ran her thumb down that part of his painting where the cattle stood and took up the notebook and crayon he had given her some days

before. But she could do nothing. She drew two lines and laid the book down. Van Gogh glanced at them, and laid the book down too on the stool. Then he looked across at the cow and took the book up again. She picked up a clod of the earth and tried to show him. He took it from her and began to model a cow.

She went every day from this time to see what he did. If she could have been afraid she would have been afraid of him sometimes in those days. His ugliness and wildness and bold singularity would have made a different woman avoid him. He threw his hand out at times as if his head were jerked by a rope. Sometimes his lips drew back from his teeth as he worked. But fear is the conscious part of a different nature from hers. She was too much tied in the great order for fear, which is an outside element, to have any way of touching her. He was not terrible to her. Watching him muttering, twitching, these movements and faces did not seem as real as the matters he disclosed. It was only because he painted so red.

He found in her something to paint. The way her nose was set on her face was material for an artist. She was a painter's object instead of only an old woman in many skirts, the color by much washing ground into itself, so that it had become texture; swinging her arm in a great sweep with her stride, the eyes faded with the sun, under a scooped-out straw hat with a tired bow at the front. Or she moved before him, minding her cows, changing their station slightly from time to time. Toward five they began to pull the ropes on which they were tethered, and then to move together toward the barn. One trotted on in front.

After some weeks he asked her to come to the studio and let him do a portrait of her. She did not go at once, but one day when she went into Arles peddling she climbed from her cart at his house. There was no strangeness in it. It was not different from her own house except for a floor of gorgeous red tiles. She had known this house for sixty years. She saw the room in two

blocks when she went in, because a blind had blown shut at one corner and divided it by light and shadow. Then she saw the big easels at each end of the room and the platform and modeling stand. She noticed at once as she looked about, the hundreds of canvases stacked against the walls. The loose way the sketches were stacked was like the loose form of grain.

On the easel near the door stood a painting of the chair which was drawn up at the hearth. It was such a chair as was drawn up to every hearth in every kitchen of the Arles countryside — a strong chair with butter-colored seat. She looked at the painting of this thick chair with a pipe left lying on the seat and she went over at once and sat down on it with her mind. As she looked at it a sudden feeling that she wanted to sit on it and occupy it compelled her. She could not sit on the painted chair and she went to the hearth and sat in the real chair, seeking what she looked at.

The number of the paintings amazed her. Amount pleased her with a peasant's satisfaction in it. They bulked against the wall as her grain bulked in the barn. Some of the paintings were nailed up where he could look at them again and again, as she put up fine ears of corn. As he worked at the easel that afternoon, she sat with hands laid on her knees and gazed about her. She gazed at a table of people eating potatoes; the bridge she crossed when going to Montmajour; washerwomen on the built-out platforms of the Rhone, their yellow carts drawn up in a line; old Jean with a cart of manure; a churn, a pot of soup, and some shoes, lemons and a bottle of wine, pictures of the plain where the ground was the principal thing — everything whirling and rocking with creative flame in color so intense that it almost bounded forward from the canvas. She went to the easel when she grew tired of sitting still and looked. Van Gogh made a movement of rage and threw his palette under the table.

Roulin, the little postman, came. He brought a letter. Bills fell out of it. Van Gogh read the letter through twice and then

went away without speaking to her again. She followed him when she had seen that he was well ahead of her and not looking back. She had her delivering still to do of her fowls and brandy. As she returned she met him in the traffic of carts and horses on the Rue de la Calade, stopping to look with a happy face at prints in a window, laden and doubled with canvas and paint and oils. Three boys were hooting after him the name of "the red fool." She drove them off, shouting a flow of stern words. She pondered it all the way home — the canvas, the paint, oil, no food.

When she went to his house some days later he scarcely noticed her. He was painting the way a shoulder breaks in a door. Something had fallen out of the letter beside bills. He was almost naked. He had thrown off one piece of clothing after another. His brush moved like a sickle. On one impulse unbridled and rich, he threw the paint to the canvas. Hunched over toward a sheet of cloth, dropping his brushes and picking up the palette knife, working in the color with a quill, squeezing whole tubes of azure into the sky, or green under the nose below a straw hat. Grave, powerful, massive, the chord of color advanced. The terrific shout and charge of his life ran off his hand. Silence and painting. What was he doing?

She noticed that he was eating ship's biscuit which lay on a chair he pulled toward him with his foot. She brought him a piece of her cheese the next time. He swallowed it without laying down his brush.

She took from Van Gogh the idea that this making paintings was a crop. It was like the farm, work never done, sowing, reaping, adding thereunto. A wall of new pictures was there every time she went. He would set up a new still life as soon as the canvas of lemons was stripped off the frame and replaced. Watching the furious way he had of working, tearing sheet after sheet from his field book, beginning again, it was the way she watered, spaded, manured, covered, and the earth gave you back. The

amount, the number of times he made Bella amazed her. So many.

He stopped at her house sometimes for supplies on his way back from a day's sketching. One evening he came to her barn and followed her up the ladder where she was pitching hay. She had forgotten him, and when she looked over her shoulder he was standing so close behind her that she felt suddenly the heat from his body. She just moved the basket for the corn with her leg between them and pitched another sheaf with her fork.

When he saw that she was not in any way afraid of him he talked to her about the sickness. When he was working particularly well it always came. He saw it cut suddenly across a day like the fall of a wall. It seemed as if in return for painting well you must go mad; and since you must go mad, you were in return paid by heaven with the beatitude of painting. Painting was the recompense. Sometimes he talked to her strangely about it. In lonely evenings it came.

'Outside the door it is waiting,' and he looked at the door as if he were about to throw himself with all his might upon what was beyond there waiting quick as lightning for him only to go to the easel.

Sometimes he could not get going. Turbulent, pursued, agonized, he was like a man hit who cannot rise. Bleak despair, the hope passionately pursued found futile, disillusion.

'I am a man come home from the Congo and the Caribbees with a spoonful of sea water and a colored handkerchief. But, oh, Mother! How inexpressibly beautiful that field of yours is.'

Then the immeasurable bliss of being a painter took him like a proud river. He would rush forward as if the Rhone were under his easel. Impossible to be grateful enough for this heavenly visitation that makes a man more than he is. He worked literally all day with a will fresh and bottomless. The factory was in full swing. He scarcely took time to eat, and even would get up in

the night after he went to bed to put something on the canvases.

'The requirements of painting are so great, Mother, that sometimes you must hammer it on the paper. You cannot spare the tube,' and he squeezed whole roots and trunks from it. He had an irresistible desire to paint thousands. One had not eyes enough to see nor hands enough to paint. There might be one thing more powerful than all that threatened one, and it was painting.

In those brave days, she came to understand that 'a man becomes a painter by painting.' She watched rhododendrons grow on the easel with the leaves set in a whorl which vibrated as if it had just stopped turning; cypresses in a light which increased them a thousandfold so that they scintillated on the heavy almond-laden air as in the aurora borealis; landscapes where the sun and moon rose together in a night of stars big as signal fires. Even the light round the green-shaded lamp was made of some sumptuous depth of fact. She looked closely at them again and again, coming to apprehend something plus itself, which is inside every object. It was her first introduction to passion and mental content. She was not herself an individual. What he did to her was not in her vocabulary. She had known no feeling other than for a thing itself. When the mistral swept the plain she was tied into what it did to everybody, a part of the landscape that was whipped by it. Her world had no individual mountains. It was level, as if before Ararats and Matterhorns had hardened in it. But now for the first time she saw an individual. She did not understand drama, but in this obscure woman was an audience for the scale of his nature. She began to compare him with the marquis, the bank teller who hung his look so sadly on your face when you pushed your book in through the cage window, with the captain of the Zouaves; and to make categories. What Vincent Van Gogh meant as human being and as hero she discerned as if she moved back from him and placed him against the porch, the city, the plain, the chemistry of cloud and sky.

She began to notice everything about him with a raised attention. Hostile, destructive, this thing that came was because he was dying of starvation and he needed care. He needed the good soup, milk, wine, cleanliness, order. The smallness of her equipment suggested these cures at once. From this time she began to appear regularly twice a week at his house when she delivered in Arles, and to clean the room when she came. She would move across it, through the disorder of drawing boards and portfolios, mahlsticks, cigar boxes full of empty tubes, all kinds of moss and branches and birds' eggs, all sorts of farmers' tools and old caps, and the can at which he had thrown things from across the room — cutting a clean swath of fastidious decency, disturbing nothing that was of moment. She noticed that he always drew his chair to one place in the room, and she put it there. As he worked he drank water from a big bucket, and she had this always filled when she left.

He saw what she was doing one day.

'Deuce take it, I am so thankful, Mother. It looks so real when it is scrubbed and clean. It is a young home in full swing.'

Van Gogh scarcely ever smiled. Just to make him smile for a moment was a good thing.

He often talked to her, over her head, the powerful agility of his mind which devoured every experience discounting her entirely.

'I tell you the fault lies in the drawing, Mother. Drawing is the basic body. It must be drawn so that the signal man in his smock, with his little red flag, will think "It is fine weather today."'

She listened to him, getting what she had not been able to get in any other way. She often pondered as she walked back to her farm along the white road things Van Gogh had said. She had never known anybody like him. Indeed, in all the world, Fate had picked for her to know a being without a parallel.

One morning as she went early across her fields she saw him

on the plain that went to Arles. He was looking at her slope and the curve of the Arles road. When she went back that way again at night she found him standing still looking at it. It was the hour when what is sky comes down into the earth. The blue actually had come out of the sky and spread on the plain, so that it was no longer separate and a curtain. Everything was becoming unreal, and cooling, and passing into the dream.

He began to paint just as she went along the wall. Suddenly she recognized and realized his thought. What thought means came to her as if it were come out of her without being conceived. It was a matter of thinking then. She too looked at the slope and the road. Constantly before, her life had been made of what was around her, like a glacier with great thick edge rubbing against what it passed. But now from the great flow she was taken into the work of making. It was the moment when experience takes a body and destination of its own, and passes into a separate joyful boundless life. It had never until that moment occurred to her that what you experience you may do. When she wanted to build a fence she had built a fence. She had reaped when she wanted to reap. She went back across her field and hunted for the piece of clay she had thrown down the first morning, when she had tried to show him how Bella was made, and took the clod home with her. It was an August night boiling with heat. She sat down at once after she had bedded and watered the cattle and began to try to model Bella.

She had to be in the barn all night waiting for a new calf. The calf came, a new calf from the cow. Trying to get on its legs under a corner of its mother, it almost stood up. She tried to shape it, the little heavy animal pulling itself out of the earth. She did not look at what she was doing. She did not look at what she had. She stood with her eyes fixed on the calf. She was looking not at what she had done, but at the way a calf tries to get on its legs. She stood there, her knees sprung in her skirt, her

legs set apart, making a triangle of herself like the black bulls of the Crau against the sky, throwing big pieces upon the bulk before her, working off at her side, watching the calf. As the little thing began to struggle up, her hands would close on the clay, forcing it to rise under the big bulk of Bella in the corner. It was a strange calf whose body came out of the lump. It would not hold together. The loam was too light.

She was bothered by it all night and first thing the next morning she went several times to look at it. She had wares to deliver in Arles in the afternoon and she went back now and looked at the portal of Saint Trophime. She looked at it carefully. The man who did three horses back in 1086 told her with his stone tongue that a shape is governed by its volumes. After she had gone about a mile beyond Van Gogh's house on the way home, she went back to the studio, pushed the door open, and went in. He was not there, and she looked at the clay on the modeling stand in the firelight without touching it and ran her hand round her neck. Then she took it home.

She had known that she should cover her calf with a damp cloth because she had seen Van Gogh do that. It was too dry the next night to work on. But she did not care. She began another calf as soon as she had finished her bedding and feeding. From a piece left of the clay she did Elaine, the old goose. She did not need to look at Elaine. Elaine was in a fold of her brain the way her thumb was in the socket of her hand.

She began to work every night in the old grain barn by the dusty light from a lantern. She did the sow. She did a foal of one of the wild white horses of the Camargue, its head turned a little toward her. She did the wild, wheeling white stallions and the black polished bulls that are raised on the Crau for bullfights. She tried a cat but she could not do a cat. She was tied down to shape. A goose is solid like a wax model. She could do a goose. But a cat has paperiness and butter in its bones. As she saw the

gathering of a cat for jumping, or the long straightened-out line as it crossed the frosty field, she registered cat. But it had no character for her. She was interested in the character of a solid. Form was the virtue of objects she had seen. The district raised race-horses, and she often had watched these beautiful creatures being practiced in light sulkies along the white road. But they were too evolved, on too fragile lines, and foreign to her. She could not do a swift horse.

The earthy body which had created form by waiting, which had bulked a child, baked other forms. She never tried to do better. She never thought of mending what she had done. She looked again and began again. When she would get into trouble she would leave off and begin another cow. She was not trying to do anything from herself. She was trying to get It. What did she mean by this? She could not make them like cows. They were terrible monolithic feeble cows she made, come out of the void, too heavy at the ends, which fell apart the next day. She didn't care. She was really trying to make solidness, and this trying was as solid and beautiful to her as stone itself. She thought only 'That's not It'; or 'That's It' — pieces of thought which belonged to her mentally, and she put them on the bulk before her.

She never took any of them into the house. But she liked them. She put certain ones up along the crossbeam of the barn, along with certain ears of corn she picked out each year and hung there to handle and look at. Now she picked the best of these, and from time to time she rubbed her animals on her sleeve as she would rub a fine ear. She did not know it was sculpture. She never thought of showing them to anyone. She did not know that people bought such things. She did not know she had a gift. She would go back each night happy when she could get an adequate shape, finishing nothing. In her nature something had begun to talk. The blankness, the uncertainty with which she

worked at first became a growth of control. What she felt and the way she worked was as far as possible from the terrific shout and race to the summit of Van Gogh. There was no battle. She did them as she sowed with her arm. Sometimes she would feel happiness that made her joints sweet. Happiness was a new thing which she had known only in bringing peace to the farm, and from her children when she had held them against herself, returning and melting them into her own body.

The days and months of the summer went on. She was busy with her rye, fruit, the pressing of wine and oil. She could not on some nights keep awake even for an hour. The seasons passed over this part of the earth. Winter came and there was less work to do. The warmth of the big bodies of her cattle made her able to work in the barn for some time. Then she had to go inside to work beside the fire. Sometimes she worked all night in the single room of her house, the bent shadow falling across the table, the fire going out. She would rub her eyes. They shone against the rising sun.

She had trouble about clay. She tried chiseling in wood. A chisel had to her hand something good in it. She tried cutting from the white stones which lay everywhere about. She had seen men work in stone with a chisel and hammer. She could imagine the form into the boulder better than into clay. She liked the resistance of the stone, and she would reveal a little sleeping foal half come out of this opposition. Her joy was great when she looked at a boulder after that. A whole plain of stone. Enough stone to last until she died. This went on for almost a year. She had passed beyond astonishment.

Van Gogh stopped at her house sometimes on his way back from sketching about the country, to get milk and eggs. One March night he came very late. She had gone out to the stable where she had already begun to work again. He went out there when he did not find her in the house. He looked along the beam

from one to another of her creatures — at her calf, the fifty cows, Elaine, the bulls, the sow, the foal. He took up in his hand the figure she had on the shelf by the window, turned it round slowly, giving some sort of snort, and looked at her. An expression came over his whole body that only one thing could bring there. His shoulders smiled and his legs smiled.

'So, Mother, you also love God with the draughtsman's fist,' he said gently. 'What an artist is — That is very curious ... How deep it is. It is infinitely deep.'

## WHAT IS A MIRACLE?<sup>1</sup>

BY MANUEL KOMROFF

**T**HE little tiny one had a Christmas card for old Rufus, who drove the school bus. She held it tightly in her hand as she hurried with her sister across the village square. The school bus was waiting, as it always did, in front of Doctor Wilson's house and beside the grocery. The beautiful great elms of the old sleepy village of Meadows spread their graceful black arms upward toward a bleak winter sky.

Four children with gay woolen caps and mufflers were already in the bus when the tiny one, Dolly, and her sister Alice mounted the step and climbed in. Old Rufus closed the door with the jointed lever handle beside the steering wheel and started the motor. The little tiny one held the card in her red mitten.

‘What is it?’ asked the old bus driver.

‘For you, Uncle Rufus.’

‘Oh my. For me?’

She nodded her head as he took the card.

‘Oh, that’s a very nice Christmas card,’ said old Rufus. ‘Thank you very much. It’s a pretty picture.’

Her eyes were wide open and earnest as she nodded her head again.

Rufus placed the card over the windshield of the bus. The children crowded about to look at the colored picture which showed the Christ Child in the manger with a golden halo over the Child's head.

'Yes, it's a very nice picture,' Rufus repeated.

'It's a picture of the miracle,' one of the bright children mentioned.

'It's not,' said Dolly. 'It's the birth of our Lord.'

And the children laughed for the little tiny one did not understand and she stood there and looked at them earnestly with wide open eyes. 'It's not what you say. It's the birth of the Lord in the stable.'

The children laughed again. The bus started and the tiny one began to cry. Great tears came to her eyes and rolled down her cheeks.

Alice mopped up the tears with her red mitten and consoled her sister by saying: 'Now don't cry. 'Cause you don't understand. It is a miracle.'

Dolly looked up at the little picture over Rufus's head and stopped crying. The bus rolled on.

For a whole long week the children had been making preparations for Christmas. They came to school in the morning with bright smiles, their faces glistening, their hair neat, shoes shined, and even their hands were clean. They sang their morning songs earnestly and loud. Arithmetic, geography, and spelling were neglected. The extra time was devoted to recitations, rehearsals for the play that was always given in the assembly hall on the last day before Christmas vacation, and art work in colored crayon. These masterpieces were hung on the classroom walls, and then when all was over the children would be allowed to take them home and present them to their parents.

And also, each class made bright paper chains that they strung from wall to wall just to make the whole school look gay

and Christmasy. All worked very hard, but it was real fun. At three o'clock all hands were sticky with paste.

Most of the children lived close to the school, and only twenty-one came in the bus which was driven by old Rufus. For many years he had been chauffeur, nursemaid, smoother-down of youthful sorrows, arbiter of disputes, critic of homework, and trusted companion. For nineteen years this old bachelor watched over the children in his bus, and daily, in any kind of weather, his bus traveled the twelve miles of winding road up to Highridge and then back in the afternoon to Meadows. Some years there were more children to bring to school. Once he had as many as twenty-seven and one year only fourteen. But this year it was twenty-one. The oldest was a farmer's boy. Buzzie Clark, who was over fourteen and would soon be going to the county high school. And the youngest was Dolly Pierson, who was only four, but she came along with her sister Alice, who was six and a half.

The bus rolled on. About a mile down the road Buzzie Clark and two other children were waiting.

'Oh, look at the Christmas card!' exclaimed one who had just come in.

'She gave it to him,' said another, pointing to the tiny one.

'I said it was a miracle picture and she began to cry,' another called out.

'It is a miracle picture!' another shouted.

'Now quiet, children,' spoke Rufus as the bus went up the country road.

The tiny one kept looking at the picture and after a while she turned and asked her sister: 'What is a miracle?'

'You are too young to understand.'

'Look,' called one. 'She don't even know what a miracle is.'

And others joined in to make fun of the tiny one until tears again filled her eyes, and when the bus stopped to take on several

more children Rufus took the tiny one and placed her on the driver's seat beside himself.

'You children need not be so smart,' he remarked. 'I bet none of you know what a miracle is.'

'We do,' several called out at once.

'Very well, but you need not tease the little one.' And with this he started the bus again.

'Mamma's pet!' someone whispered. And the bus rolled on.

In this way, on the day before Christmas, all twenty-one children arrived safely, as they always did, at the schoolhouse in Highridge. And here on this last day before the Christmas vacation everything was most happy and gay.

Rufus sat in a chair in the rear of the assembly hall and listened to the young voices singing old English songs. Then the story of the Three Wise Kings and the Star of Bethlehem was read aloud.

For nineteen years at Christmas time old Rufus had come into the assembly hall and listened to the singing and festival readings. They brought to his mind memories of events long long ago.

And now as they were reading about the Three Wise Kings, he thought of the time when he was a boy on the farm with his mother and father. And how large the farm seemed to him then. And how much snow they used to have in the old days and how clean and white it all seemed.

And while someone was reading this story of the Three Magi he saw fragments of his whole life pass before him in quick vivid snatches like a jerky moving picture.

*'Come, Rufus. Get the axe, it is time.' His father's voice was clear and distinct and he stood in the yard with his old brown jacket and fur cap. His father had a short, bushy beard, as was the custom of men long ago. 'No, son, not the little hatchet. Bring the big axe.'*

*The big long-handled axe seemed very heavy to him as they walked across the frozen field and the crust of the snow crunched beneath their boots. And then in the woods they saw the tracks of little animals and*

they heard the breaking of branches. But it was far off and they could not see the cause of this disturbance. 'Must be a bear.'

'No, son. Bears are all asleep at this season.'

'How can they sleep all winter, Daddy, without eating?'

'Yes, son. That is one of the wonderful mysteries of nature.'

'And do they dream, Daddy?'

'Perhaps.'

'And do they know what Christmas is?'

'No, son. They are but animals and cannot understand such things.'

'And all their lives they live without once having a single Christmas?'

'Without once.'

Oh, this was so sad. To think that all the creatures of the fields and forests were born and lived and died without once knowing the full-flowing joy of Christmas. And why did the Lord in heaven deny them?

Soon they stood before a green spruce tree, Father and boy.

'Not this one, Daddy. It's too small.'

'Well, stand up beside it, son, and we will measure it.'

He stood beside the tree and his father stepped back a pace or two and eyed the boy and tree together. And he smiled. There was a hidden joy in that smile.

'Yes,' he said. 'It will do. A larger one would touch the ceiling. Your grandfather used to say that the tree should be twice the height of the boy. Here, give me the axe.'

And when the tree was falling over, just toppling, he had a strange feeling in his heart because it made a low cracking sound as though it were someone crying... crying alone and secretly. Crying like a woman at night in bed...

The reader's voice was loud and clear.

'In the blue heaven a star shined brightly and this star was the fulfillment of a prophecy.'

*'Mother, is that you?' he called. 'Mother!'*

*She did not answer. He came to the head of the stair. He heard her crying alone and secretly.*

*'Mother!'*

*'Yes, son,' she finally replied. 'Go to bed.'*

*'I thought I heard . . .'*

*'It's nothing, son. Go to bed.'*

*But the sound continued night after night, and the doctor came twice each day until she died.*

In the school assembly hall the reader had just pronounced the words: 'And the Three Kings with valuable gifts in their hands journeyed forth. And the star in heaven glistened brightly and guided them safely across the wide desert.'

The children sat spellbound and the tiny one saw it all before her most clearly in jewel-like colors. It was so beautiful; and even if she did not understand what a miracle was, still, even then it was beautiful anyway. Her large eyes were open and she could see the deep blue of the sky and the star that shone to guide the kings. And they were dressed in gorgeous robes.

Rufus closed his eyes. He saw one star in a vast blue sky.

*Alone on the farm. All alone. The tree is twice the size of the boy. The bears sleep all winter. Creatures are born and die without once feeling the thing that. . . . And seeds are frozen in the ground all winter long and in the spring they swell up and burst through the soft soil. They, they, they — hundreds of them — but not all. Here and there one is frozen and does not burst out into life. The shell rots away and soon it becomes part of the earth. And the whole world is earth and water. The ocean is filled with salt waves that are dark green, the color of the branches of the tree that is twice the height of the boy. And there are rocks cold and gray that form a mineral winter and pepper the surface of the vast world.*

'And they did not know the meaning of stone that He gave them. For it meant that so firm as the stone should they hold the

faith. And they threw the stone into a well in the desert and, lo behold! it burst into flames.'

Rufus heard these words of the reader and closing his eyes he saw the great burst of flame against the heaven of a dark night. And the fire was also part of flesh and blood.

*Oh, how different it might have been! She was the only one and there could be no other. And for two years the nights were lit by a magic flame. And the fresh wallpaper that we bought together had large red roses. And I wanted only what she wanted. And then it was on a cold night before Christmas. 'No, Rufus. It can never be. I know you love me, but try as I may, I am unable to return this love. The heart has reasons that reason itself cannot know.'*

*'But perhaps later on. Perhaps in time.'*

*And time brought the letter that was folded in the magazine that had a colored cover of a man on a horse high on a sunlit cliff. And when he read the letter the roses on the wall lost all meaning. And it took so many kettles of water to wash off that pulpy paper. And now even the ink in the letter is faded. Twenty years. And what is it that makes things fade? Is it only the bright flow of time? Or is it more? Does not nature heal her wounds by a slow fading and does she not build up a new color before the old has been washed clean? Nineteen years of children — twice a day, counting them over in the bus — the small voices, the small hands and feet, the front teeth missing from all seven-year-olds, the clear eyes searching to understand a world slowly unfolding. Eyes seeking wonder. Yes, a new color arrives when the old begins to dim. Surely this is also a miracle that should be noted down in a book. And the colored picture of the man on the horse, that I hung in the kitchen, that too has faded and should be thrown away. It has lived out its life.*

When the reading was over and it was time for the children's play to begin Rufus looked out of the window at the dark slate sky and saw tiny flakes of wet snow falling. It was necessary to put the chains on the bus tires, for the winding road from High-

ridge to Meadows was a slippery one when wet. He left the assembly room just as the improvised curtain parted and he heard a small voice pipe: 'The evil king has enchanted us and the white lovely princess is asleep.'

The light snow was hardly more than a wet drizzle. He got out the chains and stretched them on the ground and as he bent down to clamp the links together a strange sensation came over him. He felt a quick thumping of his heart and his head seemed to feel queer. He stood up and leaned against the fender of the bus but soon finished the job of clasping on the chains. Then he climbed into his seat and started up the motor so that the car heater would warm up the bus before the children were out of school.

He sat there before the wheel and looked up at the colored card that the tiny one had given him that morning. His lips smiled and he closed his eyes.

*How pretty it would be if it turned colder and a white blanket of snow covered the whole country as it so often did in the days of long ago. And then tonight I might take the long-handled axe and walk out on the hill — the same hill — and find a little tree. A small one would be big enough. And suddenly he saw himself walking across the soft, flaky snow and he stood before a small tree, but he could not raise the axe. How strange to feel so powerless. 'Yes, I know, I know. You want to cry out when the wood cracks and I have no right to make anything cry like that because . . . But the tree is not for me. It is for the tiny one. The one who brought me the card. And you could not cry out like that because she is innocent . . . So innocent.' But no. He could not raise the axe. 'Yes, I know. It could not fall without crying, and nature is so full and so understanding she does not want me to hear that voice. Because . . . because we live by forgetting.'*

*The night is so still and the air so gentle that you can walk without hardly breathing. And he let the axe fall in the snow and walked*

*away between the trees on the soft white pathless carpet. And the strange and wonderful thing about it all was that his feet left no footprints in the snow. He marveled at this and he paused once or twice to reflect. He could not explain why his feet left no tracks in the snow. This was just another thing that was wonderful. Nature was filled with wonders. He walked on and on.*

‘Open the door, Uncle Rufus,’ called some of the children.  
‘Open the door.’

But Rufus did not move.

Soon quite a few of them were at the door and they banged on the window-pane. The door opened and they piled in. Eighteen were in the bus and it waited. The other three were shouting: ‘Merry Christmas everybody!’ and were soon skipping across the yard with their art work in their hands.

The door seemed to close without any motion from Rufus and the bus started out of the yard. It went through the village street and took the turn for Meadows. It rolled along a little slower than usual, but perhaps this was due to the wet road.

‘Uncle Rufus is sleeping,’ said one of the children in the back.

‘He is not,’ called Buzzie Clark.

‘Does it always snow on Christmas?’ the tiny one asked.

‘No. Not always. Only when it wants to,’ replied her sister.

The bus stopped at a crossroad and several children got out. When it started again the door was open, but soon it closed by itself when the bus swung around a long curve. It went on and on a long down grade of many turns.

In this way, in about an hour, after three or more stops they arrived at the store in Meadows.

‘Merry Christmas, Uncle Rufus,’ called the children.

Rufus did not turn his head and did not reply.

‘Open the door for us!’

He did not move.

One of the children pulled on the handle and the door opened.

All climbed out except the tiny one. She was waiting until all had left so they might not laugh at her.

‘Uncle Rufus. What is a miracle?’

He did not reply.

‘I wish someone could tell me what a miracle is.’

He did not answer.

She paused a moment and then stepping down from the bus ran into the grocery. ‘Merry Christmas,’ she called. ‘Uncle Rufus is asleep.’

‘Asleep?’

They went out to wake him. They called Doctor Wilson from next door and he climbed into the bus. But soon he shook his head.

‘Looks like an attack. Can’t do anything now. You should have called me an hour ago. He’s been dead for some time.’

‘But the bus just arrived this minute,’ argued the grocer.

The doctor shook his head. ‘I know what I am talking about. He’s been dead at least an hour.’

Then the tiny one spoke up. ‘He was asleep at the school when we left and he wouldn’t wake up. All the way he was sleeping.’

The large wet flakes of snow brought an added whiteness to his face. And the tops of the graceful elms were lost in the sky.

## SALUTATION TO SPRING<sup>1</sup>

BY MERIDEL LESUEUR

*For Mary Cotter*

**S**HE turned off the squawking radio — the battery was running down — I want different news, I want to hear it, Lord, different news, she said out loud to herself as she went into the kitchen with the baby's bottle, thinking — her temperature seems better now and she wanted to hold the bottle herself — and seeing the landlocked winter hills, snow-gripped, with the little black trees sticking out like the cross of our Lord.

The calendar above the stove said March, below a picture of a fat, naked baby. She reached up and tore the calendar down and tore the picture of the fat baby in two, and, as she poked up the fire, she threw the picture in.

Jim said, Why did you do that? She started. She knew he had been sitting in the corner of the kitchen watching the thaw on the land, wishing for seed. Why did he sit in the corner like an old woman speaking out at her from the cold darkness?

He watched her fix the bottle. She was such a tiny woman. At first her tininess had seemed strange and wonderful to him, but now it seemed ominous. He could see his children Michael and Ruth, far down the road between the black winter oaks

coming home from school. They went only in the morning now. It would take them half an hour to come up the road, but he could see them lift and fall beneath the waves of the lower forty, which was already rearing up black out of the snow, clear on top and slopes. Another week, if the sun came out, it would be ready for seeding. Is she better? he asked, and he felt his voice awkward with guilt between them.

She didn't want to answer. I don't know, she said, taking the bottle out of the pan of water and squirting some milk from the nipple to see if it was too hot. She didn't want to talk to him. She resented his sitting there and he knew it. She went out of the room and he looked out the window.

She gave the sick baby the bottle and it suckled feebly, its eyes half open. She touched the open palm and the fingers curled around her finger. She had listened to the rasping breath night after night, and now she was frightened by the quiet as the child looked at her from half-closed eyes, voluptuously as if it did not have to fight now. Mary could see the hills out the window, her other children rising over the land and moving toward the house, toward food, toward her — the red cap of Michael rising on the wave crests and then disappearing as if he was drowning. She picked up the baby and held it as if those mounting wave crests were threatening, and she could feel the awful silence of the house, of the winter-locked land, that had gone on and on, day after day. The children would want food now when they got to the house, and there was only the bread soaking in milk. The last of the store of potatoes had gone in last night's soup, and Jim sitting in the kitchen like an idiot, in broad daylight, with no money to buy seed. A man got mad when seeding time was coming on and no seed.

She would find something, boil something; there would be something to eat. The child's head rolled back a little and the half-open eye revealed the pupil as if looking at her, and she be-

gan to rub the child as if she could put her own will back into it. She had a lean strong face; Welsh by birth, she had a strong will. She would do it; nothing would stop her; she had a will like the crack of a whip. What else could have kept her going the years since her marriage: three babies, carrying water, baking, milking cows, as if you had put a sparrow to doing all these colossal tasks, but you could see her running in the yard, even after dark, after the babies were in bed, looking for eggs, darting, running like a sparrow from nest to nest, looking under boards as if she could never stop, or never could know fatigue or despair, as if her thin, wiry bones were made of steel. She had such fat babies, and she liked having them if only there was not so much work. She had a passion for her children, for having them, for giving them birth.

She rubbed the twig legs of the child, the thin chest, and held the tiny feet in one palm. She lifted one foot and put it to her mouth, put the cold toes in her mouth and blew on them. She leaned over and blew her breath on the child and she knew that despite everything the child had no resistance; it had not had enough to eat. She opened her shawl and laid the child inside close to her body. If she'll live till spring, she promised someone, it will be all right, there will be food, carrots, tomatoes; I'll plant them myself.

The children came into the house crying Mama, and that meant hunger. She put the baby back into the crib and the lips smiled curiously at her, as if the baby were very old, understood something.

She gave the children the dried bread and they seemed silent and solemn as if they knew this was the last of the food. They ate, looking at their father in the corner until he got up, put on his coat, and went out.

Every move he made was like a knife cutting her. She felt him so keenly, shut in the house so long together, since harvest,

his long, thin body, his dark burnt face, both winter pallor and sunburn still on the neck and jowls. He was like a knife, and every move cut her. Where you goin'? she cried out the door, and he went on down toward the barn. She threw her shawl over her head. The children watched her. She ran out after him, dogging his steps, crying, Where you goin', Jim? I'm goin' to town, he said back at her, walking fast to the barn and she after him, running to keep up with his scissor stride through the mud. Town, she cried; I'm goin' with you. She tugged at his coat. Naw, he said, ya better stay here lessen the baby needs ya.

She's better, she cried up at him; I got to get away from hereabouts. I got to get away too. He stopped by the pump and looked down at her where she stood in the wind, ready to fly at him like a black hen, her eyes snapping, her thin nervous body sharp-standing against the wind, full of that energy and zip that always pleased him. He grinned at her. All right, he said, we'll stop and get Janey to come and stay with the kids. I aim to go right away now. She turned and ran through the wind into the house like a girl.

Jim had a hard time getting the old tin can started. They hadn't used it all winter and they had saved the four gallons of gas since September. She and the children stood at the window watching him crank. When it began to shake, she told Janey to remember the hot blankets for the baby, kissed the upturned faces of the children, and ran out. She saw the flattened faces of the children at the window, saw the children waving, and she waved back until she and Jim were clear down to the turn.

It was wonderful to see other land, to get out of the landlocked landscape she saw from every window like a frozen sea. She knew Jim wouldn't say why he was going to town, but she had read a letter, something about a meeting about seed loans at the fire hall, and she knew that must be where he was going, especially as they began to pass other farmers going to town.

She knew everything he thought. He didn't have to tell her anything. She could feel his eye look at the land, calculate the seed, manure, lime needed. Fence posts down. She sat in her town hat and felt elegant to be driving to town. She didn't need much to feel wonderful. Life was brilliant in her and strong, and leaped up quickly in her blood for anything.

They drove through the lean strong hills she had known since her childhood, and Jim didn't say anything until finally he said, How we gonna live till spring? If he hadn't been driving he wouldn't have said this. How we gonna do it?

It was a relief; it was the first he had spoken to her about it.

Why, she cried, why, Jim, of course we'll live till spring. Why, what's got into you? Why, certainly we will; surely, haven't we always? Is there ever a time when we haven't lived till spring?

Who's been complaining? I'm sure it's not me. Why, we'll do it; yes, sir. I aim to take those three sacks of wheat in the back seat old Dahl refused to take; I aim to get some money and a sack of meal and some credit this very day. I aim to get us something to eat all right. Why, it's a holy shame, a crying shame, crying to heaven, the way we been living in this town for years, had our younguns here, everything, and can't get more credit. It cries to high heaven; it does for a fact.

It's a hard time, he said.

A hard time, she cried. Ain't we always had hard times and those before us? Did ever anybody quit?

Quit having hard times?

She grinned, Well if you want to put it that way. Hard times ain't quit and we ain't quit.

He felt better. He looked at her out of the side of his eye — that cute old hat she'd had on their honeymoon sitting on her head with the black hair combed straight back, and her nose so delicate and sharp, by gad, she didn't look old. She was like a

pullet setten on a fence, by gad; she had spunk in her all right. He felt better and took out his tobacco and laughed.

Old lady, he said, you're full of vinegar all right.

Jim, she cried, blushing, I told you —

He laughed and spit clean out the slit in the curtain.

The village street was full of men walking towards the fire hall. Yes, sir, she was right; that was what it was, a meeting on the seed loans which were due. She smiled and Jim looked away. They stopped in front of May's beer parlor and she got out and pulled down her old coat, looking to see who was in town. It looked like Saturday. Yes, sir, it was a meeting to see how they would get new seed. She saw Sadie Melthers across the street going into the grocery store. Jim said something that sounded like a grunt and went on down the street trying not to look like he was going to the fire hall to the meeting, and she ran across the street.

The sun had come up, and everyone was moving down the tiny main street in the sun. Puddles of water stood in the street where the snow was still melting. The big Moline plant was closed. No more engines running. The men were slowly meeting down at the fire hall, trying not to let their womenfolk follow. All the women were looking out of the windows of the stores seeing what their men were up to.

Mary talked to Sadie, whose children had been sick, and they both kept watching the men go down the street to the fire hall, and Mary went back into the store, looking at the canned goods, the flour, the fresh vegetables. She didn't ask for credit; she thought she would wait until after the meeting. She spoke to several women who were looking at the fresh vegetables but not buying any. Then she went out and walked down the street and went into the fire hall and sat down. There weren't many women there. They were afraid to come. All the men looked at her, and she felt afraid.

Ole Hanson was standing on the floor and he was saying, We got the bitter experience of everyday life; we taste it every day. We got to begin to know it. We got to begin to go forward.

He must have been talking a long while. Sweat stood on his lip and brow. He stopped and stood there and then slowly walked to his seat, wiping his horny head.

She sat leaning forward as if driving a horse that was running away. She heard everything they said, as one man after another got up to testify how he was willing and ready to pay the seed loans incurred during the long drouth, but that if he did so he would not be able to seed the land in the present spring. She heard them: losses of early lambs in the drouth, losses of pigs last year, no word of the bones that wintered in the lime pits. Feed none too plentiful. The men testified with the sweat standing out on them from the pressures of speech. Hard to talk now. A stenographer, a pretty girl from the city, was taking it all down when they said it. It was awkward putting down all the thick and heavy suffering into little words. The chairman said they knew that the pressure of collectors was not coming from the government who held the loans, that no one understood what was happening and that was why they were there today.

Yes, she nodded to what they said. She wouldn't have known she knew all this, but now it was said she recognized the words fitting the happening. Farrowing season this year much less favorable than last: death, heavy losses. Yes, she nodded, yes, yes.

A professor from the university got up to talk. He was a pale man with a tall head, and what he was saying was very sad. She sat back against it. He seemed sad and his white head hung down on the stalk of his body. She looked at the men sitting around her like the scarred and ruined machinery that sat out in their farm yards. You know the way, she thought; they test seed corn to see how it will germinate. You can test a man like that too.

Educated people, she thought, have poor generative power sometimes; they don't believe in anything. No good for tomorrow's seeding. No good to look to them; so she stopped listening to the professor. She didn't hear a word he said.

And then she blushed; the sweat stood out on her, and she gripped her hands. It was Jim going forward, beginning to speak. He stood there looking at the floor. His hands hung down, a little longer than anything he could ever buy to cover them. The men all looked at him. It seemed a long time before he spoke. When he did, they were all startled. You could hear a car honk outside and the sounds of the hoofs of horses, and the blacksmith in the next block shoeing.

What he said was — There's a noose around every man's throat. You can't see it this afternoon, but it's there just the same. No matter what we do, there it is; we just wiggle around with the noose around our necks every single minute.

I believe in the Constitution, Jim said. I believe in America. She looked at him with new eyes. When he said that he believed in America the blood flushed into his face. He was a good speaker. You're a man, he said; you got the parts of a man; you got rights too, you and your chilluns. We want to do what's right. We want to pay our debts. We always pay our debts. It ain't us who don't pay our debts, brothers. It ain't that we want to get away from the seed loans; that ain't the ticket, not by a long shot. No, sir. We can't pay, brothers. We can't pay. We taken the food right out our children's mouths to pay what we already paid, and that's a fact nobody can't get around.

There was clapping and the pleasure of the men at a quick tongue. Jim wiped his hands on his handkerchief and went on

— If we pay our seed loans now, we got from seven years' drouth, we ain't goin' to be able to plant any wheat this spring. It's now planting time and nary a man's got seed to plant. And these here collectors, it's got so you can't move the hay in your barn to feed a cow without uncovering a gol darn collector!

Men laughed and he continued, grinning — Yes, sir, you couldn't lift a bundle now without a collector popping out. It's getting worse, year in and year out; doggone, we all be put off like the rest been put off if we wait much longer. Nineteen thirty-four we had a crop failure. I cut a hundred and fifteen acres and put it into the silo and got a silo full of Russian thistles. During the fall I tried to get in on the feed loan and was refused that I was not able to get the waiver on the grounds I owed the bank. At that time I had fifty-seven head of cattle and I begged the Federal Reserve not to sue me, which he promised me to leave me alone. I said I hadn't beat anybody and both Federal Reserve Bank and receiver of the bank were witness to my hand that they would leave me alone.

Now she understood it better. She knew now how hard this was for him to tell it. He had never even told it to her. She had not known what was happening. She had only seen it happening.

He went on slowly — One week later the sheriff served papers on me and in twenty days to appear before a court before them and judgment was added onto me. When feed loans came on I was not able to get waivers. I had to get along with twenty-five a month and I had to shoot thirteen pigs and in that winter I lost eight head of cattle. And during the spring or summer when the alfalfa came to growth I lost three horses. When we opened them after they was dead we found alfalfa clots in the belly. Now I got a girl that's powerful sick.

A pang went through Mary as if she had forgotten about the baby.

Now we got to do something. We got to begin to go forward. These things got to be known.

He stopped and stood still and she got panicky and tried to motion for him to sit beside her, and the chairman said he thought they should appoint a committee to take what the secretary had put down and see that it got to the proper authorities

so some action would be taken here, and he said I appoint Mary, Jim's wife, because there ought to be a woman on this here committee to sit on it, and everyone was smiling at her and she felt all her own energy in her, the whole world, as if it was all in her, the energy, belief, wisdom. She got up. They saw a little black Welsh woman, her hat awry on her head, lean as a young pullet and strong in anger and passion.

I rise to say, I want to speak, she said — I think the women should be here because it is important the women be here. We know these things and we suffer because of them every day. What I mean is that we know it, and every year when we are still alive in spring, still for another year we are surprised. We are still alive for another year, we say to ourselves, and count our children, and every year we are just a little different with what has happened. Seven years now like in the Bible this has been going on. It isn't never over. It isn't never over. You say your children are an inch higher; you got one more — that's one thing we got no depression on; ain't no scarcity there! Alive yet; you are all alive! It's for hallelujah, sure enough. So that's what I rise to say. I never was on no committee, but I'll start being on one.

There was big applause. She sat down, surprised and happy. Ole Hanson got up and said that was a good speech and there ought to be more women there and he hoped they would be all together in unity, and go out of here with our arms around each other, and I hope half of us is women.

The fire hall cracked and split with laughter and the meeting was adjourned, and the pretty secretary ran down the aisle and put her hand on Mary's arm and said when would she come in and they could get the affidavits all together, and Mary looked at Jim and said tomorrow, and Jim nodded and took her arm and drew her close in to him and they walked out talking and smiling and nodding, with everyone excited and talking more than usual.

They got in the car and drove to the elevator. She put her hand on Jim's arm and said I'm a goin' this time. She got out and went into Mr. Dahl's office and said to him, I got three sacks of grain in the car, and I got to have something for my family. He said, I'm sorry but you can't sell it like that lessen you give one sack to the mill. All right, she said, you pay for two. Listen; you got to do it, hear? I got to have it and you got to do it elsen the committee will do something.

What committee is that? said Mr. Dahl. It's the seed loan committee, she said, big-like. Don't get excited, Mary, said Dahl. Mary said, Suppose you got four mouths to feed come supper and nothin' in the bin, nothin' on the shelves, nothin' in the cellar, nothin' anywhere. Well, he said, all right, I could do it, I reckon. All right, she said, do it. And he did.

They drove to the store and bought a sack of flour and she lost on the price of her wheat. She felt bitter and triumphant, and she said to Jim, Drive to the relief, I'm gonna get some hay too. He looked at her and drove to the relief. She went in and said to the girl there, Could we get a little bedding for our cattle? And the girl said they had all they could do to get straw to the animals. Mary said, Have you ever milked a cow? Why, no, the girl said. Well, then, Mary said, you don't know where the tits are on a cow. You know we could just as well wash our hands in manure, then wash the cow and that's the kind of milk that you and I are going to drink. I'm on the committee now, she said, and I want some straw for bedding. The girl said, All right, I'll do what I can. I'm a-comin' in tomorrow, Mary said, and I want it then. I'll be gettin' it tomorrow. I'm a-comin' in then to set on the committee.

And Mary marched out.

They drove rapidly into the frozen hills. It was supper and they had the supper in the back seat. Mary was feeling full of talk. They drove through the cold rise and fall of hills, the black

thickets, and she felt herself full of energy of the finest kind. She wanted to sing, to shout, to say more words that would be heard like in the afternoon. What was the good of silence, each man sitting on his farm silent as a turtle? You see, she said — sitting close to Jim's long flank — it's never over. She felt like crying, More life, more life, break these awful deathly silences and suffering. We are strong, she wanted to shout. She pressed against him — we are strong. Nothing is compared to us. We are tough and strong. She began to laugh.

I swan, for God's sake, what's so funny? If you ain't the damnedest woman.

All those who are dead this winter — all those who fought in Spain, in China, all over the world, everybody who struggled, who said something. . . . I read about a scientist and he kept a tick alive for seven years and put it on a dog and it hopped off to feed lively as all get out, hopped right off on the dog happy as could be.

He grinned, I'll be dogged, if you ain't the craziest —

A tick is nothing compared to us; it ain't a thing; it ain't got a thing on us: seven years' drouth, grasshoppers, this and that, one thing and another. That air tick ain't got a thing on us, not a thing.

I'll be dogged, he laughed. She could feel the air draw into his long, strong body. I'll be doggone, ef it ain't the cat's whiskers. You would think of that. I'll be doggone if you ain't the sweetest craziest — and he slapped her thigh roundly and his big hand plundered her breasts.

Jim, you big fool, stop. What kind of goin's on in broad daylight on the road in plain sight? You'll run us plumb in the ditch! Jim, you almighty fool!

I'll be swan: I got me some old woman: full of vinegar, full of what it takes. I'll be doggone.

She smiled. The dusk was blue and birds were flying in it.

They turned off the highway and when she saw the house she knew something was wrong. Drive faster, she said, and she could see the children at the cold windows and the girl in the doorway waiting. Her heart sank.

She was out of the car before it stopped, and she saw the baby in the crib still as death. She snatched it up and tried to warm it, blowing on the hands, into the mouth. Jim came in and took the child. Its weight was light as a sick chicken's, the eyes drawn back. You know when an animal is dying, you can feel it. He gave her back to Mary and took the children out of the room. The baby seemed so light as if she were disappearing. The breath stopped, and a terrible wrench came from Mary as if she gave the child birth again, and she walked to the door and to the window as if she would call someone. The other children were hungry in the kitchen. It was dark and cold. She laid the body down and smoothed out the limbs, closed the half-dreaming eyes. The tiny arms were not made for crossing.

She went into the kitchen, got supper, and they ate it.

She put the children to bed. Jim went out to do the chores. The children were wide-eyed in bed and she lay down beside them to soothe their fright. She wanted to say something as if an upsurge of words lay buried beneath her skin. She could see the baby's head in the crib, disappearing in the deepening dusk. It seemed quiet now where it had been — no more fretting and fever and hunger.

The children sighed and murmured and touched her and went to sleep. She waited for Jim to come back into the house. She put out her hand and felt the legs of Michael, willful like his father, and the soft fair skull of Ruth. Spring and children's voices again.

She must have slept. The house was quiet; the dog walked softly in the kitchen. The honk of the ducks sounded far into the sky. She heard Jim approach the house, come in at the door. She

saw him light the lamp and turn it low and look at the dead child. He covered her with an old coat and the light went out and she heard him get into bed.

She got up. She went past the dead child in the crib. No need to ever cover her now.

She got into bed beside him. He turned the strong scythe of his legs, the thrust and cleft of breast, and she turned into him, crying.

## AN ARM UPRAISED<sup>1</sup>

BY ALAN MACDONALD

**H**E SAW the child for the first time on a hot morning in July. She was standing at the edge of the concrete highway along the only straight stretch between the two towns. He was driving fast, for he wanted to be at his work in the bank earlier than usual in preparation for mill payday.

He scarcely noticed her that first time, except for a faint irritation as he saw her arm go up stiffly, like the handle of a pump, just as his car was passing her. If she had wanted a ride, why hadn't she started to point when she saw him coming?

He didn't stop.

Two mornings later he saw her again, standing in the same place, as he came around the curve into the straight stretch. Unconsciously he slowed down a little. When he came opposite her, up went her arm again with clocklike rigidity.

There was something in the mechanical dullness of the movement that made him feel like shaking her. Almost against his will he brought the machine to a stop, reaching over to push open the right-hand door.

She didn't hurry to cover the few feet that intervened between herself and him. She seemed to move even more slowly as she

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by Harlan Logan Associates, Inc.

approached. As she put one hand on the door handle, she paused for a second to look in at him, with no expression whatever in the dullest blue eyes he had ever seen.

‘Park City?’ she asked. Even her voice had an unpleasant thickness which grated against his ears.

He nodded.

‘Get in. I’m in a hurry,’ he said, not unkindly. He tried to keep the quick distaste he felt for her from showing in his words. For the child was not only ugly, but inexcusably dirty.

As she sat down and he leaned over to close the car door, he became instantly aware of that peculiarly acrid odor which comes from a human body, long unwashed. Her clothing, too — dress, stockings, shoes, and the knotted handkerchief which she clutched in one hand — all were filthy with the crusty filthiness of repeated wear.

He could only guess how old she might be. Probably twelve or thirteen to judge from the size of her scrawny body. But the face, with its blotched unhealthy skin, might have belonged to a woman of thirty or more. It was a big face, too big for the rest of her.

Without reason and without pity, he instantly hated her. Hated the smears of chalky powder which showed on her cheeks and nose. Hated the way she settled back into the spotless cushions of his car. Hated everything she represented as opposed to the clean, precisely ordered design of his own existence.

As the machine gathered speed again, she sat beside him awkwardly, staring straight ahead, saying nothing, seemingly interested in nothing in the morning-washed countryside.

He tried to analyze the instant revulsion of feeling her mere presence caused in him, to justify it by telling himself that the most poverty-ridden people can be clean. Like other children, she must have gone to school, for that was compulsory. She must have come in contact with other girls her own age, must

have had teachers to tell her about herself, even if there had been no training in her own home.

He made a conscious effort, looked over at her, and smiled. 'I've never seen you before along this road. Do you live around here?'

He knew she heard him, for her eyes blinked. But she said nothing. A moment later he thought he detected a slight nod of her head, although he wasn't sure.

He tried again. 'Where do you want to go in Park City? I work at the Commonwealth Trust Company. Do you want to get out before that?'

This time she looked at him, a slow almost vacant turning of the eyes. 'I'm goin' to a drugstore.' She hesitated as if undecided whether to tell more, and then added '— to get medicine for my brother.' She made a little movement of the hand which held the dirty handkerchief. He decided she must have the money tied in one corner of it.

'What's the matter with your brother?' This time, in spite of himself, his voice was sharp, almost hostile.

'I don't know,' she said, and twisted a little in her seat as if restless at being questioned.

The stupid finality of her answer only increased his irritation. He felt like throwing back his head and laughing harshly to see if she would notice even that. Then he shrugged, impatient at the intensity of his own feeling about her.

Arriving at the Commonwealth Building near the heart of the business section, he stopped and opened the car door for her. She got out deliberately and stood looking in at him. Her face untied into a grimace which he knew must be meant for a smile. Then she said, 'Thank you for the ride.' Each word came out with equal flatness, like the slow dragging of a stick against a paling fence.

He pointed across the street. 'There's a drugstore — over there,' he said. 'Don't cross until the light turns.'

Anxious to be away from her, he drove quickly around the corner to the parking lot at the rear of the bank. As he stepped from the car, he couldn't help looking down at the seat which she had occupied. He was relieved that there were no soiled spots on the upholstery.

Entering the bank, he forgot about the child immediately.

But the next morning he remembered again, as he neared the place where he had first seen her. When he noted she wasn't there, he was glad. At least she didn't hitchhike to town every day.

Nor was she there on the following day.

On the third morning, he came to the straight stretch traveling in line behind two other cars. Each of the machines had only one occupant, young men like himself driving to work in Park City. As they all rounded the curve, he saw the child a quarter of a mile ahead. Again she stood on the same spot.

When the first machine passed her, he expected to see her arm go up. But it didn't. Nor did she move when the second car approached.

He suddenly leaned forward, steering with one hand, and busied himself with the radio dial on his instrument board. For months he hadn't played the radio on his way to work in the mornings. Out of the corner of his eye he saw the child look at him, saw the wooden motion of her arm rising upward.

He went on.

After he had passed, he straightened in his seat and looked into the rear-view mirror. The child's face was looking after him, her arm was still upraised. But she hadn't turned her body nor stepped forward.

He didn't know why he stopped. He cursed the impulse that made him do it. When he backed up to the place where she stood, he was sorry he had. She seemed dirtier and uglier than before.

As he swung open the door, he said nothing. He couldn't look at her as she climbed in for fear that she might see the aversion

in his face. Once more the odor of uncleanliness curled nauseatingly against him. There was no need to say anything this time—the radio with its music taking the place of words. He was glad for it.

During the remainder of the summer, the child rode with him. Sometimes every second day, sometimes at intervals of three days. Occasionally, she carried a basket, and he concluded she must be going for food supplies. Other times she had packages wrapped in newspapers, but she never divulged what was in them.

Any attempts he made at conversation met the same flat responses that he had encountered at their first meeting. Maybe by a nod or monosyllable he would know that she had heard what he said to her. Nothing more than that. Watching her as she rode with him time after time, he became convinced, perhaps not unwillingly, that there was nothing he could do to help her, nothing that he might say which would penetrate deeply enough to have any effect upon her or her condition of living.

He came to regard her as a symbol—a symbol of something to be endured with detachment instead of hate. A thing which should be studied to be better understood and reduced to undistorted proportions by that understanding. In this new pattern, he saw her as a potential breeder of all things evil, for in years to come she would spew from her womb creatures of her own kind to war against and impede the advancement of other humans like himself. Using her type as a common denominator, he found it easier to solve the problems of class strife, upheaval, and human brutality which spashed across the front pages of the newspapers he read.

He liked to dwell upon this new reaction he had achieved toward her. There was a warming broadness about it.

Then, one morning late in October, she told him she had taken her last ride with him. She didn't say it that way. She spoke three unhurried words as he was opening the car door for her in

front of the bank. 'We're movin' tomorrow' was all she said. She didn't add where she was moving nor why.

Somehow the unheralded announcement enraged him, for she stood on the sidewalk looking in at him as if expecting him to do something about it. He compressed his lips. If she had been able to find words enough to tell him she was moving, and had something further to say, why didn't she say it?

He waited, grimly.

She turned to go and then stopped.

He didn't help her. Whatever she said now, or whether she said nothing, didn't matter. In another moment he'd drive around the corner and be free of her. At the prospect, he experienced an upsweep of relief, like a person who has shaken off an ominous pursuing presence.

Suddenly the child turned her eyes from him and stared fixedly at something above his head. Then she said, 'Thank you for all the rides — it's the most fun I've ever had.'

Even as the revealing implication of her words came pounding in on him, she had turned — and was walking stiffly away from him, down the street.

# THE HAPPIEST MAN ON EARTH

BY ALBERT MALTZ

**J**ESSE felt ready to weep. He had been sitting in the shanty waiting for Tom to appear, grateful for the chance to rest his injured foot, quietly, joyously anticipating the moment when Tom would say, 'Why of course, Jesse, you can start whenever you're ready!'

For two weeks he had been pushing himself, from Kansas City, Missouri, to Tulsa, Oklahoma, through nights of rain and a week of scorching sun, without sleep or a decent meal, sustained by the vision of that one moment. And then Tom had come into the office. He had come in quickly, holding a sheaf of papers in his hand; he had glanced at Jesse only casually, it was true — but long enough. He had not known him. He had turned away.... And Tom Brackett was his brother-in-law.

Was it his clothes? Jesse knew he looked terrible. He had tried to spruce up at a drinking fountain in the park, but even that had gone badly; in his excitement he had cut himself shaving, an ugly gash down the side of his cheek. And nothing could get the red gumbo dust out of his suit even though he had slapped himself till both arms were worn out.... Or was it just that he had changed so much?

True, they hadn't seen each other for five years; but Tom looked five years older, that was all. He was still Tom. God! was *he* so different?

Brackett finished his telephone call. He leaned back in his swivel chair and glanced over at Jesse with small, clear blue eyes that were suspicious and unfriendly. He was a heavy, paunchy man of forty-five, auburn-haired, rather dour-looking; his face was meaty, his features pronounced and forceful, his nose somewhat bulbous and reddish-hued at the tip. He looked like a solid, decent, capable business man who was commander of his local branch of the American Legion — which he was. He surveyed Jesse with cold indifference, manifestly unwilling to spend time on him. Even the way he chewed his toothpick seemed contemptuous to Jesse.

'Yes?' Brackett said suddenly. 'What do you want?'

His voice was decent enough, Jesse admitted. He had expected it to be worse. He moved up to the wooden counter that partitioned the shanty. He thrust a hand nervously through his tangled hair.

'I guess you don't recognize me, Tom,' he said falteringly, 'I'm Jesse Fulton.'

'Huh?' Brackett said. That was all.

'Yes, I am, and Ella sends you her love.'

Brackett rose and walked over to the counter until they were face to face. He surveyed Fulton incredulously, trying to measure the resemblance to his brother-in-law as he remembered him. This man was tall, about thirty. That fitted! He had straight good features and a lank erect body. That was right too. But the face was too gaunt, the body too spiny under the baggy clothes for him to be sure. His brother-in-law had been a solid, strong young man with muscle and beef to him. It was like looking at a faded, badly taken photograph and trying to recognize the subject: the resemblance was there but the difference

was tremendous. He searched the eyes. They at least seemed definitely familiar, gray, with a curiously shy but decent look in them. He had liked that about Fulton.

Jesse stood quiet. Inside he was seething. Brackett was like a man examining a piece of broken-down horseflesh; there was a look of pure pity in his eyes. It made Jesse furious. He knew he wasn't as far gone as all that.

'Yes, I believe you are,' Brackett said finally, 'but you sure have changed.'

'By God, it's five years, ain't it?' Jesse said resentfully. 'You only saw me a couple of times anyway.' Then, to himself, with his lips locked together, in mingled vehemence and shame, What if I have changed? Don't everybody? I ain't no corpse.

'You was solid-looking,' Brackett continued softly, in the same tone of incredulous wonder. 'You lost weight, I guess?'

Jesse kept silent. He needed Brackett too much to risk antagonizing him. But it was only by deliberate effort that he could keep from boiling over. The pause lengthened, became painful. Brackett flushed. 'Jiminy Christmas, excuse me,' he burst out in apology. He jerked the counter up. 'Come in. Take a seat. Good God, boy' — he grasped Jesse's hand and shook it — 'I *am* glad to see you; dont' think anything else! You just looked so peaked.'

'It's all right,' Jesse murmured. He sat down, thrusting his hand through his curly, tangled hair.

'Why are you limping?'

'I stepped on a stone; it jagged a hole through my shoe.' Jesse pulled his feet back under the chair. He was ashamed of his shoes. They had come from the Relief originally, and two weeks on the road had about finished them. All morning, with a kind of delicious, foolish solemnity, he had been vowing to himself that before anything else, before even a suit of clothes, he was going to buy himself a brand-new strong pair of shoes.

Brackett kept his eyes off Jesse's feet. He knew what was bothering the boy and it filled his heart with pity. The whole thing was appalling. He had never seen anyone who looked more down and out. His sister had been writing to him every week, but she hadn't told him they were as badly off as this.

'Well, now, listen,' Brackett began, 'tell me things. How's Ella?'

'Oh, she's pretty good,' Jesse replied absently. He had a soft, pleasing, rather shy voice that went with his soft gray eyes. He was worrying over how to get started.

'And the kids?'

'Oh, they're fine.... Well, you know,' Jesse added, becoming more attentive, 'the young one has to wear a brace. He can't run around, you know. But he's smart. He draws pictures and he does things, you know.'

'Yes,' Brackett said. 'That's good.' He hesitated. There was a moment's silence. Jesse fidgeted in his chair. Now that the time had arrived, he felt awkward. Brackett leaned forward and put his hand on Jesse's knee. 'Ella didn't tell me things were so bad for you, Jesse. I might have helped.'

'Well, goodness,' Jesse returned softly, 'you been having your own troubles, ain't you?'

'Yes,' Brackett leaned back. His ruddy face became mournful and darkly bitter. 'You know I lost my hardware shop?'

'Well, sure, of course,' Jesse answered, surprised. 'You wrote us. That's what I mean.'

'I forgot,' Brackett said. 'I keep on being surprised over it myself. Not that it was worth much,' he added bitterly. 'It was running downhill for three years. I guess I just wanted it because it was mine.' He laughed pointlessly, without mirth. 'Well, tell me about yourself,' he asked. 'What happened to the job you had?'

Jesse burst out abruptly, with agitation, 'Let it wait, Tom, I got something on my mind.'

'It ain't you and Ella?' Brackett interrupted anxiously.

'Why, no!' Jesse sat back. 'Why, however did you come to think that? Why, Ella and me' — he stopped, laughing. 'Why, Tom, I'm just crazy about Ella. Why she's just wonderful. She's just my whole life, Tom.'

'Excuse me. Forget it.' Brackett chuckled uncomfortably, turned away. The naked intensity of the youth's burst of love had upset him. It made him wish savagely that he could do something for them. They were both too decent to have had it so hard. Ella was like this boy too, shy and a little soft.

'Tom, listen,' Jesse said, 'I come here on purpose.' He thrust his hand through his hair. 'I want you to help me.'

'Damn it, boy,' Brackett groaned. He had been expecting this. 'I can't much. I only get thirty-five a week and I'm damn grateful for it.'

'Sure, I know,' Jesse emphasized excitedly. He was feeling once again the wild, delicious agitation that had possessed him in the early hours of the morning. 'I know you can't help us with money! But we met a man who works for you! He was in our city! He said you could give me a job!'

'Who said?'

'Oh, why didn't you tell me?' Jesse burst out reproachfully. 'Why, as soon as I heard it I started out. For two weeks now I been pushing ahead like crazy.'

Brackett groaned aloud. 'You come walking from Kansas City in two weeks so I could give you a job?'

'Sure, Tom, of course. What else could I do?'

'God Almighty, there ain't no jobs, Jesse! It's a slack season. And you don't know this oil business. It's special. I got my Legion friends here but they couldn't do nothing now. Don't you think I'd ask for you as soon as there was a chance?'

Jesse felt stunned. The hope of the last two weeks seemed rolling up into a ball of agony in his stomach. Then, frantically,

he cried, 'But listen, this man said *you* could hire! He *told* me! He drives trucks for you! He said you *always* need men!'

'Oh!... You mean *my* department?' Brackett said in a low voice.

'Yes, Tom. That's it!'

'Oh, no, you don't want to work in my department,' Brackett told him in the same low voice. 'You don't know what it is.'

'Yes, I do,' Jesse insisted. 'He told me all about it, Tom. You're a dispatcher, ain't you? You send the dynamite trucks out?'

'Who was the man, Jesse?'

'Everett, Everett, I think.'

'Egbert? Man about my size?' Brackett asked slowly.

'Yes, Egbert. He wasn't a phony, was he?'

Brackett laughed. For the second time his laughter was curiously without mirth. 'No, he wasn't a phony.' Then, in a changed voice: 'Jiminy, boy, you should have asked me before you trekked all the way down here.'

'Oh, I didn't want to,' Jesse explained with naïve cunning. 'I knew you'd say "no." He told me it was risky work, Tom. But I don't care.'

Brackett locked his fingers together. His solid, meaty face became very hard. 'I'm going to say "no" anyway, Jesse.'

Jesse cried out. It had not occurred to him that Brackett would not agree. It had seemed as though reaching Tulsa were the only problem he had to face. 'Oh, no,' he begged, 'you can't. Ain't there any jobs, Tom?'

'Sure there's jobs. There's even Egbert's job if you want it.'

'He's quit?'

'He's dead!'

'Oh!'

'On the job, Jesse. Last night, if you want to know.'

'Oh!... Then, 'I don't care!'

'Now you listen to me,' Brackett said. 'I'll tell you a few things that you should have asked before you started out. It ain't dynamite you drive. They don't use anything as safe as dynamite in drilling oil wells. They wish they could, but they can't. It's nitroglycerin! Soup!'

'But I know,' Jesse told him reassuringly. 'He advised me, Tom. You don't have to think I don't know.'

'Shut up a minute,' Brackett ordered angrily. 'Listen! You just have to *look* at this soup, see? You just *cough* loud and it blows! You know how they transport it? In a can that's shaped like this, see, like a fan? That's to give room for compartments, because each compartment has to be lined with rubber. That's the only way you can even *think* of handling it.'

'Listen, Tom —'

'Now wait a minute, Jesse. For God's sake just put your mind to this. I know you had your heart set on a job, but you've got to understand. This stuff goes only in special trucks! At night! They got to follow a special route! They can't go through any city! If they lay over, it's got to be in a special garage! Don't you see what that means? Don't that tell you how dangerous it is?'

'I'll drive careful,' Jesse said. 'I know how to handle a truck. I'll drive slow.'

Brackett groaned. 'Do you think Egbert didn't drive careful or know how to handle a truck?'

'Tom,' Jesse said earnestly, 'you can't scare me. I got my mind fixed on only one thing: Egbert said he was getting a dollar a mile. He was making five to six hundred dollars a month for half a month's work, he said. Can I get the same?'

'Sure, you can get the same,' Brackett told him savagely. 'A dollar a mile. It's easy. But why do you think the company has to pay so much? It's easy — until you run over a stone that your headlights didn't pick out, like Egbert did. Or get a blow.'

out! Or get something in your eye, so the wheel twists and you jar the truck! Or any other God damn thing that nobody ever knows! We can't ask Egbert what happened to him. There's no truck to give any evidence. There's no corpse. There's nothing! Maybe tomorrow somebody'll find a piece of twisted steel way off in a cornfield. But we never find the driver. Not even a finger nail. All we know is that he don't come in on schedule. Then we wait for the police to call us. You know what happened last night? Something went wrong on a bridge. Maybe Egbert was nervous. Maybe he brushed the side with his fender. Only there's no bridge any more. No truck. No Egbert. Do you understand now? That's what you get for your God damn dollar a mile!"

There was a moment of silence. Jesse sat twisting his long thin hands. His mouth was sagging open, his face was agonized. Then he shut his eyes and spoke softly. 'I don't care about that, Tom. You told me. Now you got to be good to me and give me the job.'

Brackett slapped the palm of his hand down on his desk. 'No!'

'Listen, Tom,' Jesse said softly, 'you just don't understand.' He opened his eyes. They were filled with tears. They made Brackett turn away. 'Just look at me, Tom. Don't that tell you enough? What did you think of me when you first saw me? You thought: "Why don't that bum go away and stop pan-handling?" Didn't you, Tom? Tom, I just can't live like this any more. I got to be able to walk down the street with my head up.'

'You're crazy,' Brackett muttered. 'Every year there's one out of five drivers gets killed. That's the average. What's worth that?'

'Is my life worth anything now? We're just starving at home, Tom. They ain't put us back on relief yet.'

'Then you should have told me,' Brackett exclaimed harshly. 'It's your own damn fault. A man has no right to have false pride when his family ain't eating. I'll borrow some money and we'll telegraph it to Ella. Then you go home and get back on relief.'

'And then what?'

'And then wait, God damn it! You're no old man. You got no right to throw your life away. Sometime you'll get a job.'

'No!' Jesse jumped up. 'No. I believed that too. But I don't now,' he cried passionately. 'I ain't getting a job no more than you're getting your hardware store back. I lost my skill, Tom. Linotyping is skilled work. I'm rusty now. I've been six years on relief. The only work I've had is pick and shovel. When I got that job this spring I was supposed to be an A-1 man. But I wasn't. And they got new machines now. As soon as the slack started they let me out.'

'So what?' Brackett said harshly. 'Ain't there other jobs?'

'How do I know?' Jesse replied. 'There ain't been one for six years. I'd even be afraid to take one now. It's been too hard waiting so many weeks to get back on relief.'

'Well, you got to have some courage,' Brackett shouted. 'You've got to keep up hope.'

'I got all the courage you want,' Jesse retorted vehemently, 'but no, I ain't got no hope. The hope has dried up in me in six years' waiting. You're the only hope I got.'

'You're crazy,' Brackett muttered. 'I won't do it. For God's sake think of Ella for a minute.'

'Don't you *know* I'm thinking about her?' Jesse asked softly. He plucked at Brackett's sleeve. 'That's what decided me, Tom.' His voice became muted into a hushed, pained whisper. 'The night Egbert was at our house I looked at Ella like I'd seen her for the first time. *She ain't pretty any more, Tom!*' Brackett jerked his head and moved away. Jesse followed him, taking a

deep, sobbing breath. 'Don't that tell you, Tom? Ella was like a little doll or something, you remember. I couldn't walk down the street without somebody turning to look at her. She ain't twenty-nine yet, Tom, and she ain't pretty no more.'

Brackett sat down with his shoulders hunched up wearily. He gripped his hands together and sat leaning forward, staring at the floor.

Jesse stood over him, his gaunt face flushed with emotion, almost unpleasant in its look of pleading and bitter humility. 'I ain't done right for Ella, Tom. Ella deserved better. This is the only chance I see in my whole life to do something for her. I've just been a failure.'

'Don't talk nonsense,' Brackett commented, without rancor. 'You ain't a failure. No more than me. There's millions of men in the identical situation. It's just the depression, or the recession, or the God damn New Deal, or...!' He swore and lapsed into silence.

'Oh, no,' Jesse corrected him, in a knowing, sorrowful tone, 'those things maybe excuse other men. But not me. It was up to me to do better. This is my own fault!'

'Oh, beans!' Brackett said. 'It's more sun spots than it's you!'

Jesse's face turned an unhealthy mottled red. It looked swollen. 'Well, I don't care!' he cried wildly. 'I don't care! You got to give me this! I got to lift my head up. I went through one stretch of hell, but I can't go through another. You want me to keep looking at my little boy's legs and tell myself if I had a job he wouldn't be like that? Every time he walks he says to me, "I got soft bones from the rickets and you give it to me because you didn't feed me right." Jesus Christ, Tom, you think I'm going to sit there and watch him like that another six years?'

Brackett leaped to his feet. 'So what if you do?' he shouted. 'You say you're thinking about Ella. How's she going to like it when you get killed?'

'Maybe I won't,' Jesse pleaded. 'I've got to have some luck sometime.'

'That's what they all think,' Brackett replied scornfully. 'When you take this job your luck is a question mark. The only thing certain is that sooner or later you get killed.'

'Okay, then,' Jesse shouted back. 'Then I do! But meanwhile I got something, don't I? I can buy a pair of shoes. Look at me! I can buy a suit that don't say "Relief" by the way it fits. I can smoke cigarettes. I can buy some candy for the kids. I can eat some myself. Yes, by God, I want to eat some candy. I want a glass of beer once a day. I want Ella dressed up. I want her to eat meat three times a week, four times maybe. I want to take my family to the movies.'

Brackett sat down. 'Oh, shut up,' he said wearily.

'No,' Jesse told him softly, passionately, 'you can't get rid of me. Listen, Tom,' he pleaded, 'I got it all figured out. On six hundred a month look how much I can save! If I last only three months, look how much it is—a thousand dollars—more! And maybe I'll last longer. Maybe a couple years. I can fix Ella up for life!'

'You said it,' Brackett interposed. 'I suppose you think she'll enjoy living when you're on a job like that?'

'I got it all figured out,' Jesse answered excitedly. 'She don't know, see? I tell her I make only forty. You put the rest in a bank account for her, Tom.'

'Oh, shut up,' Brackett said. 'You think you'll be happy? Every minute, waking and sleeping, you'll be wondering if tomorrow you'll be dead. And the worst days will be your days off, when you're not driving. They have to give you every other day free to get your nerve back. And you lay around the house eating your heart out. That's how happy you'll be.'

Jesse laughed. 'I'll be happy! Don't you worry, I'll be so happy, I'll be singing. Lord God, Tom, I'm going to feel *proud* of myself for the first time in seven years!'

‘Oh, shut up, shut up,’ Brackett said.

The little shanty became silent. After a moment Jesse whispered: ‘You got to, Tom. You got to. You got to.’

Again there was silence. Brackett raised both hands to his head, pressing the palms against his temples.

‘Tom, Tom —’ Jesse said.

Brackett sighed. ‘Oh, God damn it,’ he said finally, ‘all right, I’ll take you on, God help me.’ His voice was low, hoarse, infinitely weary. ‘If you’re ready to drive tonight, you can drive tonight.’

Jesse didn’t answer. He couldn’t. Brackett looked up. The tears were running down Jesse’s face. He was swallowing and trying to speak, but only making an absurd, gasping noise.

‘I’ll send a wire to Ella,’ Brackett said in the same hoarse, weary voice. ‘I’ll tell her you got a job, and you’ll send her fare in a couple of days. You’ll have some money then — that is, if you last the week out, you jackass!’

Jesse only nodded. His heart felt so close to bursting that he pressed both hands against it, as though to hold it locked within his breast.

‘Come back here at six o’clock,’ Brackett said. ‘Here’s some money. Eat a good meal.’

‘Thanks,’ Jesse whispered.

‘Wait a minute,’ Brackett said. ‘Here’s my address.’ He wrote it on a piece of paper. ‘Take any car going that way. Ask the conductor where to get off. Take a bath and get some sleep.’

‘Thanks,’ Jesse said. ‘Thanks, Tom.’

‘Oh, get out of here,’ Brackett said.

‘Tom.’

‘What?’

‘I just —’ Jesse stopped. Brackett saw his face. The eyes were still glistening with tears, but the gaunt face was shining now, with a kind of fierce radiance.

Brackett turned away. 'I'm busy,' he said.

Jesse went out. The wet film blinded him, but the whole world seemed to have turned golden. He limped slowly, with the blood pounding his temples and a wild, incommunicable joy in his heart. 'I'm the happiest man in the world,' he whispered to himself. 'I'm the happiest man on the whole earth.'

Brackett sat watching till finally Jesse turned the corner of the alley and disappeared. Then he hunched himself over, with his head in his hands. His heart was beating painfully, like something old and clogged. He listened to it as it beat. He sat in desperate tranquillity, gripping his head in his hands.

## LEVIATHAN<sup>1</sup>

BY ELLIS ST. JOSEPH

**F**AIR today and warmer.

A hot sun ballooned on high, held to the sweltering earth by the thin thread of a well-ordered universe. The hovering clouds, like cream turned sour by the heat, curdled into spoon-drift. Transfixed by the sun's ray and roasted at oven temperature, a deluded weathercock pointed with undeviating accuracy the way of yesterday's wind.

Mr. Campaspe's train carried him away from the city at a rattling pace, past factories and suburban dwellings, across the fields, and out into the open countryside. Having reversed the back of his green plush seat, he sat with the engine behind him, travelling backwards, looking out the window at the succession of scenes which took him by surprise and fell away before his blurred vision.

His wife sat with her lover on the opposite bench, a patent-leather bathing bag between them, and both so close to Mr. Campaspe that each of his outspread knees was caught separately in a fork of legs. The guilty couple sat erect, open-eyed and un-winking, like a pair of dolls. Their conversation had died in his presence and was buried under the meaningless smile on her lips.

Clad in a white linen suit, the wrinkles of which followed the

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by McCall Corporation.

swells and creases of his bulging corpulence, Mr. Campaspe felt blissfully cool; the purple stripes of his shirt faded to pink as the wind dried its damp cloth; and even the coarse fibre of the plush upholstery ceased to burn and irritate the soft flesh of his bottom. With a movement of tremendous upheaval he brought forth a handkerchief from his hip pocket, mopped well within the horseshoe of his baldness, rubbed his bulbous half-buried nose to a turn, wiped the accumulated oil from the hanging corners of his grim full-blooded lips, and concluded by raising his head like a turtle to get at the bag of his chin. Then he opened his small eyes, which were bright and full-viewed, and took in everything. Pursing his lips into a sadly apologetic, fat man's smile, Mr. Campaspe addressed his two companions.

'Hot, eh?'

Pola hesitated before replying, taking time to consider, not her husband's words, but his incomprehensible behavior for the past twenty-four hours. The acute uneasiness which comes from perceiving a stranger in a familiar body tempered the customary asperity of her response. 'Yes,' she said, with a nod which set the bloated celluloid cherries of her straw hat clattering on the brim. 'It's hot enough to roast an ox.'

Otto judged Mr. Campaspe with his eyes and damned him with a smile. 'You feel it worse than we do,' he commented.

Mr. Campaspe looked in the direction of his wife's lover, cast shy hangdog glances, envious and admiring, at the swarthy blue-chinned virility of him, the broad nose and flat lips, and the lean line of joining between neck and jaw bone. Suddenly, when Otto answered with a companionable wink, the stout man flushed like a woman. He felt his coat hanging open in the wind and made desperate efforts to jerk it about and cover the shameless bulging of his breasts and belly. He was terribly self-conscious. Inexplicably, Mr. Campaspe felt culpable in the presence of this young culprit.

It was envy, rather than jealousy, which prompted Mr. Campaspe's rejoinder. 'I suppose I do. But then I don't know what it is to be any different, since I've always been' — he paused — 'as I am. Just the same, I wouldn't mind changing places with you.'

A wayward smile feathered his wife's face, as, absently, with her elbow on the windowsill, she flattened her red bangs. Each new onslaught of the sun revealed her with the bold, uncompromising rigor of an overexposed photograph and fixed the unnatural smile on her lips.

'I can't wait to take off my clothes,' announced Otto, 'and get into bathing trunks.'

'A bath house will look pretty good to all of us,' Pola agreed in her hoarse throaty voice.

'I'm going to dive into the first cold green wave I see,' continued Otto. 'How about you, Campaspe? Do you swim?'

'Me?' murmured Mr. Campaspe. 'Like a whale. Once you get me in, you can't get me out!'

Abruptly he burst into a shrill falsetto laugh, a little too high and held too long, but accompanied by such shaking and straining that the syllables of his mirth were flung out of his mouth explosively, like the intermittent coughing of a man with a fishbone stuck in his throat.

Many years this line had served Mr. Campaspe, by way of a joke, as an excuse for his long immersions. He was accustomed to hide his big and proportionately sensitive body in the waves, hour upon hour, finding refuge from the pointed fingers and pointless jibes in which any beach abounds. He would lumber down the sandy incline at breakneck speed, so fast that terrified bathers looked to their safety and not at him; plunge into the water with a belly-ripping splash, and never rear his shoulders above the surface until it was time to go home: only then would he walk out of the ocean, dripping wet and pickled in brine, and

show himself to the gaping crowd in a soaking skin-tight bathing suit moulded to his womanly swells. Mr. Campaspe was prodigious in the water, on shore a comic buffoon.

'There's nothing like swimming to take off weight,' said Otto.  
'You should do a lot of it, Campaspe.'

'I do,' Mr. Campaspe replied. 'Only it doesn't help —'

In so far as Pola could not fathom her husband, she feared him, and it relieved her sense of insecurity to trample him underfoot. Laughing, she covered her open mouth with both hands as if to bottle up her glee, a pretty childlike gesture that made men love her, and also served to suppress her ugly pink gums, broad as ribbons, which disfigured her face when the lips split.

'Don't listen to him, Otto,' she blattered. 'He hasn't been in for a year. It's enough to get him into the tub, he's so lazy!'

'It's not that,' stoutly maintained Mr. Campaspe.

'Or maybe,' Pola continued from under her hand, as another grin slowly disgorged itself, 'he's so modest...'

She knew his secret. Seven years of married life had told her nothing of him, except that which he would not have her know. Slyly she looked at him, to catch his glance and judge the extent of his wound, but his eyes were shut tight, his full red lips were buttered with an idiotic smile, as gently he rocked frontwards and back.

'Modest? A big fellow like him, that's good! That's a good one, Campaspe!' Indulgently Otto winked at the husband, giving him credit for the joke, and simultaneously he nudged the wife. She felt the hard flesh of his arm pressed against her, and she was so perturbed that she breathed twice in one breath.

'Yes!' she cried hoarsely, 'a good one!'

'Me?' crowed Mr. Campaspe, still shaken by the painful implication in Pola's remark concerning a bath house, and dismayed at the bare possibility of being made to undress in Otto's presence. 'Modest — ?' He could get no further; his tongue

thickened, and he shuddered with laughter. Otto joined him, boisterous in his approval, perhaps a bit derisive, but determined to give the old man a good time for his money.

‘So that’s why you won’t come out of the water!’ Otto shouted uproariously. ‘And you said you were a swimmer! Man, I bet I can swim rings around you!’

Pola divined some inscrutable purpose, an unconscious direction, to the conversation, unsuspected by Otto, perhaps even by Mr. Campaspe, and she dreaded its possible outcome. By an association of thought so wide that an uninitiate to its science would have construed it as intuition, she warned Otto, crying, ‘He could drown you!’

She took the breath out of their laughter, but in the subsequent moment of embarrassment, it was reborn: even Pola succumbed to the redoubled merriment, and had all she could do to keep both hands over her open mouth; in the end they were unable to stop.

Their train veered round upon a high trestle, shrieking wildly, and a long streamer of black smoke struck their open window. Almost smothered with coal dust and deafened by the piercing whistle, the three of them, in all this noise and confusion, filled the car with the muffled dead sound of their laughter.

Mr. Campaspe had been a fat child, a fat youth, and now he was a fat husband. Boys had mocked him on the street; girls had tittered like mice in his presence; now his wife grimaced wryly at his touch as though her teeth had grated on gristle when she thought to have closed them on meat. She had discovered early in their marriage that he was immensely funny until taken personally, and then he became a bad joke. Though the unfortunate man made frantic efforts to ensnare her affection, using costly luxuries as bait, the wily fugitive nibbled, consumed, and was off; and his constantly renewed offerings barely sufficed to keep her in the vicinity of the trap. Finally, convinced of his

failure before he commenced, he sought to reduce, and tried diet after diet, as a chronic unbeliever turns from church to church, looking for a miracle where there is no faith. The upshot of the whole business was that, after he once had paid tribute and acknowledged her superior power, she tyrannized over him, and held him in subjection as Britannia does the mammoth India.

Before marriage Pola was the cashier in his favorite restaurant; she was little more than that now as his wife. Yet he adored her, and deep inside him he knew that she was right to treat him as she did, for nobody, least of all Mr. Campaspe, could love anybody so disgusting as himself. He regarded his obesity as a crime which must be concealed at all cost, even to mitigating its appearance by the use of constricting garments, carefully planned postures and poses, and by acting the married Victorian in a nightshirt, or rather pyjamas. It was because he had never revealed himself to male or female before that he was now trembling with fear at the mere thought of halving a bath house with his wife's lover.

Mr. Campaspe was suspicious of them from the start, and little things made him more so. They would cease talking when he entered a room. Alone they laughed together as though they owned an unspeakable joke at his expense. Otto tolerated him with a smile of cynical indulgence, and Pola covertly laughed at him behind her hands. Then one day he came home to find an obscene drawing of a fat man, on which was carefully printed: *MR. CAMPASPE*. It was the end.

That evening he flung a fat arm around Otto's waist, giving him a constricting hug, the while he looked for the effect of his words, and said: 'You're a regular carpet knight with the ladies, aren't you? You lucky dog!'

Somewhat embarrassed, but pleased in spite of himself, Otto rewarded Mr. Campaspe with an ambiguous smile.

'Come now,' continued Mr. Campaspe, pulling the young man still closer, 'you can tell an old married couple like us. We know

what kind of tricks you're up to. Don't try to pull the wool over our eyes. You're a devil with the women, sure as you're born!'

Otto colored slightly under Pola's jealous gaze. She loathed his boasting because she believed it, and knew that, whatever her husband's plot, Otto must succumb to such mental seduction.

'Sure,' Otto chuckled. 'Sure. Sure.'

'That's not the way to talk,' objected Mr. Campaspe. He clutched the muscle of Otto's right arm with frantic fingers and felt it in one place after another. 'There's muscle for you, yes, sir! How the women love it, eh? You've got the build that gets them. There isn't an ounce of fat on you, just muscle and bone. That's what they love — they'd let you do anything to them when you've got a build like that —'

A wave of deviltry and swelling desire raised Otto to his toes and then down on his heels.

'Yes, sir!' sang out Mr. Campaspe, red in the face, and grinning through a horse collar. 'You're a man, that's what you are! You don't want people to think that you're a fish! And you've got to have your women, sure you do. Not one, not two —'

'I've got a hundred!' shouted Otto, and shook himself free. Then he fell back a step and just stood and looked at Mr. Campaspe with a foolish leer on his face.

'You — swine!' It was Pola's hoarse voice, and hurled with such venomous passion that Mr. Campaspe, whose fat back was turned to her, felt it enter into him like a harpoon. He spun around with the shock, and his little eyes caught her as she left the room.

'What do you think of that?' Otto asked thickly. 'Tell me, Campaspe. Why would she say a thing like that? And to me?'

'To *you*?' shrieked Mr. Campaspe. He bent double, as with a cramp, and the whole apartment echoed with his strained fishbone laughter.

When Otto had left, crowding the house by his absence, Mr.

Campaspe, to whom no blind hope remained for corrosive doubt to destroy, worded the accusation of his wife. He had barely spoken before she was upon him. He had never believed her capable of such raving invective, or of such energy, even in anger; emphatically she denied the whole charge; she cursed Otto and she cursed Mr. Campaspe; and she defended her virtue with the vilest words she knew. As she shouted, the veins in her neck were swelled out by the pressure within, and her broad pink gums so nakedly bared that her face resembled a splitting skull. Finally: even if it were so, she yelled, what would he do about it? And she trounced out of the room.

Mr. Campaspe sat for a long time with his face covered by his hands. Then with a long downward movement, he pulled down the corners of his eyes and the corners of his mouth, and clutching his hands under his chin, brought them down upon his lap as if in prayer. He sat for so long that his feet went to sleep, but he formed a resolution at last, resolved it into words, and limped inside to let it fall.

Oppressed by the heat, Pola reclined in bed, her face creamed for the night and her red hair set with combs. She watched him come into the room, and a cold fear with him, which beat him to her bedside. Mr Campaspe knew what he had to say, dropped his jaw to say it, and said something completely different.

‘We’ll go to the beach tomorrow, all three of us,’ he said, and, no less than his wife, heard the unexpected speech with amazement.

It was incomprehensible to Mr. Campaspe why, when he planned to break with Pola, his tongue had wagged at some unbidden impulse and to such conflicting purpose, but so profound was the feeling of inexplicable bliss which followed upon it, so sweet the assuaging waters, that he sounded their depth without questioning their presence, or his being in them, and contented himself with the flood. Whereas another man in like circum-

stance would have felt twenty years younger, Mr. Campaspe felt twenty pounds lighter.

Arrangements were concluded the following morning, and before noon Mr. Campaspe boarded the train, happy as a clam at high water. Though Pola had been compelled to oblige him, she considered his invitation ominous and his present self-complacence foreboding; and in so far as she suspected an ulterior motive, though she could not fathom it, she was apprehensive, fidgety, and constantly on the defensive. She surmised hidden springs of action in Mr. Campaspe, which actually he had not tapped himself. She felt the presence of something other than jealousy, which joined her husband and her lover, and separated her from them both. But suddenly their positions were transposed, and it was she who laughed, while her husband, at the passing mention of a bath house, was rocked by a earthquake.

It may be that Mr. Campaspe arrived at his destination on this particularly hot September afternoon; that he was pushed amid the sweltering people into a bus and was jounced off to the beach; perhaps he spoke with Pola who sat beside him and with Otto who hung from a strap above them; it is possible that they entered a bathing pavilion which welcomed them with flying pennants and gaily-colored umbrellas and the combined roar of voices and waves; still Mr. Campaspe was oblivious of it, of everything but the fact that he must disrobe before another person and display his pitiful body.

A sunburned young man in spotty canvas trousers conducted Pola, Otto, and Mr. Campaspe down a central aisle transected by numerous rows of wooden lockers. Occasionally they stepped aside to avoid contact with the returning bathers, whose muddy feet incautiously pattered over the splintery boardwalk. Carefully they skirted the puddles and water-pans. They passed hundreds of identical doors, bleached bone-white and warped, before the bath house keeper indicated the locker assigned, turned

his passkey in the latch, bestowed towels upon them, and walked away.

‘Ladies first!’ snickered Pola. She disappeared within and slammed the door behind her. The two men hardly had settled down to wait outside in the broiling sun before Otto removed his coat impatiently, undid his tie, and began to open the buttons of his shirt.

‘I’m just getting ready,’ he said.

Cold and perspiring, Mr. Campaspe leaned against the house opposite, and studied the crooked, peeling boards of the locked door.

‘I’ll be out in a moment,’ shouted Pola; and she flung her pink slip over the transom, so that the strap end hung in full view of the men. Parrying each other’s eyes by staring at the flimsy piece of silk, they shifted uneasily upon their feet.

‘Just a second and the two of you can get in!’

Mr. Campaspe was shivering with apprehension; the blood rushed to his cheeks, felt wet on his cheeks; and his tongue constricted like a dead mollusc in the hard cavity of his mouth. He had anticipated the memory of this moment for so long that it seemed to comprise his entire life. Fool — blundering idiot — madman: he was worse than all of these combined! How could he have proposed such a trip as this? Why, when it was furthest from his thoughts, had he suggested it in the first place? How blindly, stupidly happy he had been — without reason — as he had taken the steps which led to his own undoing! Now he must go in with Otto, undress before Otto, strip for Otto —! No!

‘Take your coat off, man!’ Otto ordered. ‘You’ll burn up alive!’

‘No! No!’ cried Mr. Campaspe, almost before Otto had spoken. ‘Didn’t you know? I’m modest! That’s a good one!’ His shriek of fishbone laughter was smothered in the soft stuff of Pola’s step-ins as they followed her slip to the transom.

Mr. Campaspe's eyeballs trembled dizzily in their sockets and then rolled in Otto's direction. He saw that Otto was weighing the niceties of Pola's underwear as he wiped the sweat from his neck and chest. A solitary curl of black hair hung out over his white undershirt and glistened in the bright sunlight.

'I'm dripping,' said Otto.

Mr. Campaspe yearned for the ocean, for its intimate embrace and infinite expanse; he longed to wed the ringed horizon, to be at home on its heaving bosom, secure in the hurricane. Terror had schooled him, taught him the way of escape. He had chosen between the paternal ocean and its postdiluvian rib of land, and like the lunged whale, briny mammal that drowns in the ocean it inhabits and is helpless when stranded on shore, he sought the impregnable deep of his origin. Hidden, he would fear nothing. Then *he* should be supreme. Then it would be Otto's turn —!

Suddenly, leaping without warning from the deep waters it had been troubling into the brilliant light of day, the latent reason for his words to Pola and his subsequent happiness was revealed to him: he recognized what grim purpose had moved him in the dark, he realized what there was still to do. And when Pola opened the door and stepped out into the heat, attired in an abbreviated brown suit, he scarcely looked at her, but smiling with happiness, locked himself in the bath house with his wife's lover.

It was dark and blood-warm inside. The wooden walls of their confining cubicle, though dry as cork, were marked with streams and pools of evaporated moisture; a sandy sediment, covering the floorboards, crackled and scraped under foot. Their movements were so restricted that the men could not turn without touching each other. Pola's apparel hung around them, hemming them in, interlarding the faint odor of salt water and perspiration with the feminine smell from powder and cheap perfume.

'It's a pretty close fit,' chuckled Otto.

Otto's voice sounded unnaturally loud to Mr. Campaspe, who in his turn, whispered, 'I hope I'm not crowding you out...'

'Hell, no! But if you'd rather, you can take off your clothes first, and I'll wait for you outside. What do you say?'

Thus, unexpectedly came his chance — a means of escape from the purging shame and premeditated crime into the monotonous horror of his past life! For a moment he hesitated, and then: 'No,' he said slowly, 'you get undressed with me.'

A narrow board in the rear wall served as a bench. Otto, after discarding his shirt, sat down and opened his legs wide in front of him. Mr. Campaspe watched him rip open the fly-buttons of his trousers and insert his fingers to loosen up the cotton pants.

'Whew!' sighed Otto. 'This is a relief.'

'We'll hurry, eh?'

Without replying, Otto lighted a cigarette and inhaled a few lung-filling puffs, clouding the locker with a gray-brown smoke which floated upwards and over the transom.

Mr. Campaspe could not avert his smarting eyes from his companion. Something brazen about Otto — an aggressive physical virility, perhaps — embarrassed Mr. Campaspe, but compelled his gaze, made him continue to look and struggle to see nothing.

'Well,' Otto said, 'let's get it over with.'

Then Otto stood up. Slowly pivoting round, the two men began to strip. Back to back, with their buttocks touching, they undid, unloosed, and unbuttoned. Otto drew his undershirt over his head, dropped his trousers and pants, and then, abiding stark naked, sat down to remove his shoes. Meanwhile Mr. Campaspe felt his warmth, and breathing audibly, followed his movements from beneath lowered lids. He contrived to put off all his clothes, except for his striped-pink shirt, whose tails fell in generous folds which covered him completely. It would require a Herculean ef-

fort to unburden himself of it, for it was more than cloth, a fleshly burden, and he was resolved that the weight of it should be felt by Otto.

His socks poked into his shoes, and both pushed under the bench, Otto stood up unclothed, and observed Mr. Campaspe with some surprise, that he did not divest himself of his shirt, and appear as Otto did. But Mr. Campaspe was oblivious of inequality; his eyes saw outwards only; he lived in Otto. The moted sunlight haloed the man's black hair as with St. Elmo's fire, and blotted his eyes darkly, and purpled the bristles of his chin, so that his head was difficult to look at; but his body was bathed in a green subaqueous light that cast no shadows, and which betrayed his form clearly, flatly and unglamorously, as in a medical chart of anatomy.

The fat man stared with a painful fascination at the broad shoulders and narrow hips, the build of a land creature, a tight-bellied runner, olive in color, slender and lithe, and well-hung: with long, flexible muscles that formed the skin without corrupting it; a chest that swelled gently, broke on the ribs, and rippled down to his middle; long, straight legs tapering to trim ankles, large feet and a generous spread of toes; and a mat of stiff, dank hairs, wet with perspiration, curling and twining on his chest, triangular-shaped, with its inverted apex in the navel, from which the hair trickled in a narrow line over his abdomen and down to his loins . . . Yes, Mr. Campaspe informed himself, this was a stallion, a stag, a goat, a creature of the land, of the hills, of the high places, of cavorting in the sun and copulation in the dark — as though there were shame in a drop of moisture — humiliation in man's humble conception in the water.

Mr. Campaspe's arms hung impotently at his sides, soft and boneless, unable to raise themselves aloft, to effect his will. His prodded brain was like the beach sands, erased and marked in turn, by each new wave of pain. Otto had what he loved, and for

that Mr. Campaspe hated him: it was the destructive love of the ocean for the land, that twice a day takes the land, and consuming it, is repulsed amid repeated caresses. Yet, because fulfillment lay only in death, because this nude young man would never laugh again, dry-eyed in the sunlight, nor repeat what he had seen, Mr. Campaspe's arms rose palpitating, and dropped the shirt at his feet.

Otto pored over the incredible sight. He did not perceive the exultant smile on the fat man's lips, nor the shuddering of those lips, which threatened to disrupt their muscular mask. Though Otto had seen fat men before, their wrinkled creased obesity, repellently obscene, never had he believed possible the baggy white monstrosity swelling in front of him. It was epicene. With an emotion disturbingly new, Otto gazed at the great pendulous breasts, big-nippled and covered with a coarse brown hair, like huge milk coconuts. Then Otto chuckled uneasily, and lunging with his fist, playfully struck Mr. Campaspe a blow on the breast. It hurt, but Mr. Campaspe stood unashamed, with a smile tugging at the corners of his grim mouth and his eyes closed, completely surrendered.

‘You!’ Otto exclaimed. ‘You’re like a woman!’

Quite suddenly, as though it were he who was embarrassed, and not Mr. Campaspe, Otto turned away, stepped into his stiff dry trunks, and left the bath house. Following briefly after, Mr. Campaspe led the way to the beach. They had scarcely begun when they encountered their locker-boy, who bowed in passing, and as he caught sight of Mr. Campaspe burst into a coarse laugh. Strangely, Otto was provoked and took the fellow's laugh as meant for himself; somehow the exposure of another's shameful secret had made him a party to it; and he felt the hurt of it as formerly had Mr. Campaspe. His hot blood climbed in spurts and starts until it drowned his brain and flooded his eyes. Abruptly compacting his fist, he rammed it into the laughing boy. The youth sank to his knees, coughing, gasping for breath.

'What's the matter with you?' screamed Pola. 'Otto! Have you lost your mind?'

'He laughed,' Otto mumbled.

It was Mr. Campaspe's turn to be carefree. He had expelled the evil spirit which had possessed him by transmitting it to another. The fat man was not to be deceived by this act of seeming generosity. And as he looked back over his shoulder and saw the bath house keeper struggling to rise, he acknowledged the fact, that more bodies than his own would be left behind him this day.

When they lay down on the crest of the beach, surrounded by crowds of supine sun-bathers, Mr. Campaspe breathed contentment, pleased by this brief period of rest as he needed all available strength for the completion of his plan.

'I'll tell you,' he said at last, rolling over in the sand. 'I'll give you a race.'

'To the water?' queried Otto.

'And out.'

'So you think you can run faster than I can?'

'No.'

'Then what good is a race?'

'I can swim better than you.'

'You're a liar, Campaspe.'

'No, he's not,' averred Pola. As she bent over, blinking, to brush a green-bottle fly from her leg, the crease of her bosom rode up towards her throat. Her head, with its red hair encased in a rubber cap, had lost all character.

'Come on,' urged Mr. Campaspe; 'let's have a race.'

'Look out, Otto! You don't know him!'

'I'm not afraid,' Otto insisted.

But Pola was piqued. 'He's better than you are,' she said. Otto mumbled, 'I'll show you whether he is or not.' And rising precipitately, he began to run, zigzagging through the people,

stepping over arms and between bodies and legs, down to the water's edge.

'Unfair!' shouted Pola.

That was the last word Mr. Campaspe heard. He was lumbering down the sandy declivity so fast that women looked to their children's safety and not at him. He plunged into the ocean a second after Otto, and came up to the surface a full yard ahead of him.

Out they swam, through the breakers and beyond the ropes, with the roar of the ocean in their ears and its briny taste in their mouths. Submerged completely but for one side of his face and his flailing arms, Otto lashed the surf into a frothy foam with his crawl. Mr. Campaspe moved relentlessly forward, causing scarcely a ripple by his breast stroke, cutting through the water as though drawn on a towline. Side by side, with the fat man leading slightly, they battled the incoming tide, and left the outmost of daring bathers behind them. Though Otto never slackened his speed for a moment, and magnificently strained himself to overtake his competitor, rising chest-high as the rollers struck him, always just ahead of Otto, seemingly without effort, moved Mr. Campaspe. Sometimes the latter's head disappeared in the water for a full minute, and rose again, having gained a perceptible advantage. 'It's inhuman,' Otto thought. And then, with unseeing glassy eyes, as he wrestled with the green waves, he viewed the whole afternoon in a strange new light. He sensed, without comprehending it, what Mr. Campaspe had done to him; and he belabored the ocean, beating it to a jelly, as hatred changed his blood into vitriol. Now Mr. Campaspe was a full twenty feet in advance, and so confident of victory that not once did he look back to see what had become of Otto. 'Unfair!' Pola had shouted. It is! shouted Otto with a mouthful of water. Anger at being taken advantage of, wrathful indignation at the horror which had been heaped upon him, spurred Otto, and

precipitated him from a race into pursuit of the tremendous creature who sped before him. Determined that this elder man should not down him, that he should not be surpassed by Pola's husband, he retched his breath, sick with violent effort, and broke himself in vain. At last, when they had swum to where the land birds rarely wing their way, Otto gave up; a great weariness consumed him, a carelessness of all cost and consequence, and in a weak voice, dream-like, he cried: 'Wait! Wait!'

Mr. Campaspe heard him and pitch-poled in the water. Otto perceived the little eyes impersonally studying him, waiting, it seemed, for Otto to approach. Otto was sinking. 'Campaspe!' He wailed. But the little eyes looked at him as though there were no brain behind them, and they were only two green dots dancing on the blue water. Heroically, Otto toiled over the stretch that was longer than its length, nearer, nearer to Mr. Campaspe. 'Campaspe doesn't hear me,' his tired brain reiterated. 'He doesn't know I need him. I must reach him to tell him —' Ultimately he was there. Desperately, his strength expiring, he cried: 'I'm played out!'

'Go down, you bastard! Drown!'

Mr. Campaspe seized him by the shoulders and shoved him under the surface. Then the fight began. If Mr. Campaspe believed that a dying man has no more resource than his last breath, he rapidly discovered that he was mistaken. No sooner had Otto's eyes opened upon green water than he grabbed whole handfuls of Mr. Campaspe's flesh, pulled at him savagely, ripped the fat man's suit, and so rigorously clamped him that if Otto sank to the bottom, he would bring down his assailant with him. Over and over they rolled, now above the water, splashing and grunting, now under, locked in hushed, murderous embrace. Panting and coughing, Mr. Campaspe fought to keep Otto below, but despite his exceeding weight, he was unable to pry free from the powerful hold that Otto had on him, or to break the man's

hold on life itself. Now Mr. Campaspe gloried in the pain of his clutched flesh! Mr. Campaspe hated that flesh even beyond Otto's hatred of it, and blissfully he gave it away, that he might be free. Finally Mr. Campaspe found means to finish the combat. With Otto clinging to him like a drowning infant, Mr. Campaspe rose bodily from the ocean, filled his lungs full of air, and sounded the shuddering billows. Down they went together. The water became a maelstrom about them, green, then gray, moiling before their eyes, muffling the heart-beat in their ears, down, slowly down, as a minute flowed by and more. At last Otto's mouth broke open; bubbles rolled out into Mr. Campaspe's face; the entangling fingers and knees relaxed their passionate hold; and the young man's body quietly fell away from him after the orgasm of death.

When Mr. Campaspe uprose to the surface, he beheld a new world about him. It was a very silent, empty, and awesome world. Apathetic — stunned by the murder — he listened profoundly. The silence was appalling. He looked upwards: but the clouds were too distant to catch hold of, and there was no sound in heaven. . . . A last bubble arose and broke with the sound of thunder on the waves. Again the old world surrounded him. Again he heard the chopping gait of white horses up the whale path. And from the shore, faintly over the carrying water, the combined cry of happy men and holiday-makers came to him as a prolonged wail of human woe.

He looked to the beach, and witnessed a great commotion, a running and panic, which blackened the sands with people, and brought the bathers down to the water's rim, where they stood, pointing with their outstretched arms to sea.

He had been seen! Thousands of eyes were upon him! Frozen with fear, he watched men plunging into the water, catamarans being launched, and Mr. Campaspe was powerless to flee from them. Like bits of the land broken from shore, they came to

claim him who belonged to the sea! Unexpectedly their direction altered, and following their new path with his eyes, he learned that it was not he they wanted, not he they had noticed, but between Mr. Campaspe and the beach a tiny dot, a human head, now on the surface, now beneath, fighting for life, appearing and disappearing, flashing a telegraphic message for help.

Treading water slowly, secure now and safely hidden, Mr. Campaspe watched hundreds of people bent upon the rescue of one human life, bringing effort, hope, and prayer to the saving of it; and he balanced the great labor of preserving life with the comparative ease of taking it.

Terror possessed him. With the bit of horror clamped between his teeth, he made for the beach. He awakened to a realization that the tide had turned; the waters were running out; he was further from land than he had ever been before. And he began to battle with the ocean itself, with his own destiny, struggling to gain the beach; but apparently the land sent out great waves to repulse him and drive him away. Mr. Campaspe was no longer calm. The movements of his vast body made the waters boil. The waves spouted high their defiance to the sky, and flew like spittle before the battering charge of his direct attack. Open-mouthed, but unheard, he thundered silence to the sea. But the more ponderously he tossed about, the deeper he sank, and the farther he drifted from shore.

When Mr. Campaspe had turned finally, tired of fighting himself, and outward passed with the tide, his way was clear. He swam out and out, until it seemed that he had no weight, no body at all.

## PIANO<sup>1</sup>

BY WILLIAM SAROYAN

**I** GET excited every time I see a piano, Ben said.  
Is that so? Emma said. Why?

I don't know, Ben said. Do you mind if we go into this store and try the little one in the corner?

Can you play? Emma said.

If you call what I do playing, Ben said.

What do you do? Emma said.

You'll see, Ben said.

They went into the store, to the small piano in the corner. Emma noticed him smiling, and wondered if she'd ever know anything about him. She'd go along for a while thinking she knew him and then all of a sudden she'd know she didn't. He stood over the piano, looking down at it. What she imagined was that he had probably heard good piano playing and loved that kind of music, and every time he saw a keyboard and the shape of a piano he remembered the music and imagined he had something to do with it.

Can you play? she said.

Ben looked around. The clerks seemed to be busy.

I can't play, Ben said.

She saw his hands go quietly to the white and black keys, like a real pianist's, and it seemed very unusual because of what she felt when that happened. She felt that he was someone who would be a long time finding out about himself, and someone somebody else would be much longer finding out about. He should be somebody who could play a piano.

Ben made a few quiet chords. Nobody came over to try to sell him anything, so, still standing, he began to do what he'd told her wasn't playing.

Well, all she knew was that it was wonderful.

He played half a minute only. Then he looked at her and said, It sounds good.

I think it's wonderful, Emma said.

I don't mean what I did, Ben said. I mean the piano. I mean the piano itself. It has a fine tone, especially for a little piano.

A middle-aged clerk came over and said, How do you do.

Hello, Ben said. This is a swell one.

It's a very popular instrument, the clerk said. Especially fine for apartments. We sell a good many of them.

How much is it? Ben said.

Two hundred forty-nine fifty, the clerk said. You can have terms, of course.

Where do they make them? Ben said.

I'm not sure, the clerk said. In Philadelphia, I think. I can find out.

Don't bother, Ben said. Do you play?

No, I don't, the clerk said.

He noticed Ben wanting to try it out some more.

Go ahead, he said. Try it some more.

I don't play, Ben said.

I heard you, the clerk said.

That's not playing, Ben said. I can't read a note.

Sounded good to me, the clerk said.

Me too, Emma said. How much is the first payment?

Oh, the clerk said. Forty or fifty dollars. Go ahead, he said, I'd like to hear you play some more.

If this was the right kind of room, Ben said, I could sit down at the piano for hours.

Play some more, the clerk said. Nobody'll mind.

The clerk pushed up the bench and Ben sat down and began to do what he said wasn't playing. He fooled around fifteen or twenty seconds and then found something like a melody and stayed with it two minutes. Before he was through the music became quiet and sorrowful and Ben himself became more and more pleased with the piano. While he was letting the melody grow, he talked to the clerk about the piano. Then he stopped playing and stood up.

Thanks, he said. Wish I could buy it.

Don't mention it, the clerk said.

Ben and Emma walked out of the store. In the street Emma said, I didn't know about that, Ben.

About what? Ben said.

About you.

What about me?

Being that way, Emma said.

This is my lunch hour, Ben said. In the evening is when I like to think of having a piano.

They went into a little restaurant and sat at the counter and ordered sandwiches and coffee.

Where did you learn to play? Emma said.

I've never learned, Ben said. Any place I find a piano, I try it out. I've been doing that ever since I was a kid. Not having money does that.

He looked at her and smiled. He smiled the way he did when he stood over the piano looking down at the keyboard. Emma felt very flattered.

Never having money, Ben said, keeps a man away from lots of things he figures he ought to have by rights.

I guess it does, Emma said.

In a way, Ben said, it's a good thing, and then again it's not so good. In fact, it's terrible.

He looked at her again, the same way, and she smiled back at him the way he was smiling at her.

She understood. It was like the piano. He could stay near it for hours. She felt very flattered.

They left the restaurant and walked two blocks to the Emporium where she worked.

Well, so long, he said.

So long, Ben, Emma said.

He went on down the street and she went on into the store. Somehow or other she knew he'd get a piano some day, and everything else too.

## THE GIRL FROM THE RIVER BARGE<sup>1</sup>

BY WALTER SCHOENSTEDT

**W**E LIE among the tall reeds underneath the willow. Our bare feet are hanging over the mossy river bank into the quiet green water of the Deime. From the dark outline of the barge in the middle of the river come the sharp fumes of coal tar. I become aware of the sweat of the horses which has sunk into my clothing. The cuffs of my shirt-sleeves are brown at the edge from the moisture of the manger. Maria, the girl from the barge, has pressed her knee tightly against mine. Her eyes are half closed to avoid the slanting rays of the sun. But she is happy, not pensive. I can feel the warmth of her breath, warmer than the sultry air. Her dark hair has fallen over her face, but there is no evening breeze yet to blow it softly back and forth. Soon it will come, and then her hair will sway gently, like a clump of dry hay. The corner of her oval mouth looks sun-dried; a little piece of skin clings to her lower lip.

‘What are you thinking about?’ she asks suddenly, without moving.

‘Nothing. I was just looking at you. Come, let’s go in.’

‘I’m too tired now. And you can’t get really cool in the water.

Tell me something about the city, about what the women do there and what you do . . .

'I've told you so much already. It's dull. The city's always dull, anyway, much more dull than it is here. The city's no place for you. You'd begin to look pale and your mouth would be greasy red.'

Maria laughs. Her hands brush against my chin. They are small hands, but hard, and they smell of fresh perch and of the black barge.

As I climb down into the water, I see that Maria is completely naked under the blue linen dress. I dive, and when I open my eyes under the water I can see a broad streak of sunlight across shifting, watery circles. The pressure on my eardrums keeps getting stronger. The water pushes me upward, but I still have the strength to bring my feet to the surface first. My head stays under. Now I can no longer stand the pressure in my ears. Then my head is in the sunlight. Maria's laughter seems to come to me from a distance, because my ears are still ringing.

I draw myself slowly over the mossy ridge onto the meadow. . . .

I know that Maria is lonely and that she has many desires, desires such as only young people have. She does not yet know the pain of living, but she will soon learn it, although she is very pretty. I know this and I am sad because of it. Right now, I feel the way I felt when Paul died of consumption. His father had had no money to send him into the mountains, into the sunlight. His mother sobbed for a long time over the little body. . . .

The drops of water from my body fall upon her face. They look like tears, but not tears of sorrow, for she is smiling. I want to control myself. If I can't, if the way she is sitting in front of me now makes me want her too much, then I'll chase her away roughly. Go back to your barge, I'll say. She won't understand that. Her head will sink down, a little wrinkle will run across her forehead from the top of her nose, and her lips will become

tightly compressed. Then she will go, without looking around, and then I'll want terribly to see her cry, so that I may have a memory to cling to.

'I must get the horses,' I say to her, when I have finished dressing. 'After supper I'll come up to the boat for a while and smoke a pipe with your father.'

'No, I'm coming along,' she says, and she stands up. Then we walk through the tall grass toward the wood, near which the corral stands in a little hollow. The horses are already standing at the rickety gate. The black gelding has laid his head across the neck of the brown mare; out of his mouth thick green threads of spittle are dribbling into her golden-brown mane. The horses look at us with warm, friendly eyes. Their nostrils tremble eagerly. Only the yellow stallion seems to be in bad temper; he picks at a wild caraway shrub that gives him no pleasure. A songless lark soars into the approaching dusk. At the corral it is darker because of the nearness of the wood; already the mist hovers in the straight forest lanes.

I untie the rope on the gate. The horses press close. I ask Maria:

'Which one do you want to ride?'

'The yellow stallion,' she answers swiftly.

'Count him out! If he throws you, it's your own fault.'

As Maria approaches, the yellow stallion stands still and raises his head. The peasant I work for has told me that stallions can tell the difference between a man and a woman. I hate the yellow stallion. Maria puts her hands on his back; I take hold of her hardy, strong hips. She is light; I am glad when the horse begins to prance. Her hands seize his mane. For myself, I get the long-limbed black gelding that always drives the stallion away. Then we begin to ride slowly.

Under our mouths lie the manes of the horses, and the mossy soil of the meadow slaps against their bellies. The path is straight

and covered with logs, so that the wagons will not bog down. The Deime gleams, almost silver, to the left of us. In front, poplars rise into the purpling horizon. On the path, too, there is no wind, but it is fragrant with fresh-cut hay. The backs of the horses pitch. Maria sways with every movement of the stallion, as if she were rocking herself. She hums a melody. Her thighs rub against the rough hide. Then the horses try to step out. We hold them back and keep to a trot. On this path it is easy to fall. 'Come on, come on! my little yellow stallion, giddap, giddap!' Maria croons. We climb past the gravel pit up to the well behind the rambling old barn. Slowly we slip from the warm backs of the horses. I draw the pail high up on the pole. It is somewhat cooler at the well. The horses need a good deal of water today. The wooden sides of the well are foul and wet. Far down, at the surface of the water, there is a greenish gleam, although it is very dark. The pail rattles on the pole again and the weighted handle draws it swiftly upward. As I raise my head for a minute I see Maria standing on the other side of the trough. She blinks at me, very tiredly, I think. Then she lowers her head and her hair falls down in thick bunches. Behind Maria, almost at the horizon, I see the outline of the black barge, which is leaving tomorrow. Angrily I raise the last pail of water. Hunch-backed Daniel is running around the farm, shrieking like mad at the hens. Whenever he does that he makes a racket and goes: cluck-cluck-kim-cmere. The old chicken-maid comes out with the kitchen pail. First she looks at me, then at Maria. Then she leers nastily. Sunday, in church, she'll again slobber all over herself. On the way home, she'll sneak the bottle of schnaps out from under her wide coat and gulp it down. In three days she'll bake the usual four enormous breads and with her filthy fingers write on the kneaded loaves: W-C-A-G (With Charity And Grace), one letter on each bread. The bread with the C is my bread. She stands in the twilight for a time. Her face is yellow. I can

see the ugly stumps of teeth in her mouth. She says nothing, merely leers, nods her head a bit, and then walks quickly back to the yard. Now the horses have drunk enough; they raise their heads. The stallion trots into the stable first, followed by the brown mare and then by the other horses.

I toss hay down from the loft, for their peaceful evening meal. As she shoves the hay into the rack with a little pitchfork, Maria talks to the stallion. Tomorrow I'll harness the beast as lead horse to the triple-shared plow! Maria's voice sinks into the warmth of the stable. I descend the ladder slowly and stand close to her.

'Why don't you go and eat supper?' I ask roughly. 'You have to get up early in the morning and travel on in your barge.' I nearly said 'stinking barge,' but if I said that she'd be sure to think that I meant everything connected with her.

'I'm going,' she says very mildly. 'You can eat with us, you know. You'll get the same thing anyway.'

We go slowly down to the Deime, walking far apart. A star has risen over the water. The river moves softly, and we are silent. But now there comes a gentle wind. The tall grass is wet against our legs. Maria keeps looking straight ahead. I am afraid to take her hand. It will be moist again, and the tiny seeds of the meadow cress will be sticking between her fingers. Around us is the heavy East Prussian night, calm and peaceful. The wind bends the grass, uncovers the silver shimmering stalks. Now the wind rustles through Maria's hair, which is still dark. We are silent. Maria is warm and vital, like the stallion. Tomorrow Maria will go away; she will sit near the big steering-pole and she will not turn around to look back. Then we shall never see each other again. . . .

Go, Maria. You will not come back. On the Gilde or on the Pregel you'll find a coarse lover, a peasant from the peat-bog districts or a sailor from the Baltic Sea. The first thing your children will learn will be the odor of the water and of smelt.

But then your skin will become dry and your mouth will lose its curve and its color. Then I should like to see you and read in your eyes how you have learned the pain of living that has now become for you the whole landscape, that always, now, pours down into your life from above. Then I should like to ask you about it — about love and what it meant to you. Perhaps then your eyes will hold more than beauty, perhaps they will be stern and wise and you will answer: poverty has played so great a part in my life that it has choked love. Now I neither cry nor laugh. I have never been able to struggle for love because the struggle for bread has consumed all my strength . . . .

But now we are young, the meadow is covered with silver, about us is the night, and tomorrow you depart. On the barge it is darker; the star has disappeared. Maria goes in front of me over the narrow gangplank. Suddenly, the voice of the old man speaks from the darkness:

‘Well, it’s about time you came, Maria!’

I can hear the old fellow spitting into the water. All about him is the reek of tobacco. Wordlessly, he shakes hands with me. We climb down the steps into the cabin. Maria’s mother sits numbly at the table and stares at us vacantly. The battered kerosene lamp smokes thickly. Potatoes lie on the table, covered by a linen cloth to keep them warm. On the wall there is a picture of a white angel with fat cheeks. It is in a black frame decorated with myrtle leaves. Diagonally beneath it, a long cherrywood pipe bobs back and forth. Maria sits down, takes a potato, and begins to peel it. Her eyes are warm and brown. The old woman puts a clay pot, with linseed oil, on the table. She digs her fingernail into a potato, peels it, and dips it into the oil. The old man does not peel his potatoes. He stuffs the whole potato into his mouth and chews. The oil leaves little drops of fat on the lips. Maria’s mouth becomes fuller. Her breasts press against her dress, large as apples.

Outside, the water gurgles. A clock ticks. The air in the cabin is sultry. Set into the wall is Maria's bed. Her father has painted it with roses, bright-red roses. The bedcovers are blue-checked, like those the peasants use. . . . Empty eyes, warm potatoes, and beads of grease on the lips. . . . The fingers of the two old people are crooked. Maria's fingers are smooth. Potato peels stick to them and become curled up. In the clay pot, in the oil, a piece of potato floats.

The old man fills his pipe and hands me the tobacco pouch, which is made of a dried pig's bladder. And then we smoke. The women begin to clear the table, I go on deck with the old man. A little formally, we sit down. I feel the wind again. The meadow and the water merge into each other.

'Well, we're leaving tomorrow,' the old man begins. 'Thank you for the milk. We don't often get it. Or the peasants want too much money. It's pretty tough on the barge. . . .'

His words drip softly into the darkness. His voice is like our surroundings. I should like to ask him why he doesn't sail up this way all the time, but then Maria comes and sits beside us. Sparks fall and hiss past us as they die. Maria see-saws back and forth. It makes her seem nervous, but her eyes are closed and peaceful. The old man does not go . . .

'Well, then, thank you very much,' he repeats. 'We probably won't see each other again, I guess . . .'

Suddenly I feel Maria's brown eyes, which have become large and moist and which keep looking at me as she has never yet looked at me.

She raises her head and gets up. The wind presses the thin dress against her body. Very quietly, I say to the old man:

'No, I don't think so either. We won't see each other again.'

But now he still does not leave and I know that he will not go. Maria says sluggishly: 'Pat the yellow stallion for me, and don't work him to death. And mother says to thank you for the milk,

too. She has already gone to bed. By the time you are out in the fields with the horses, tomorrow, we'll already be in Labiau.'

Her father gets up and shakes hands with me heartily. But he remains standing and looks out past me. Maria lowers her head again. I stroke her arm. Dew falls, or a tear. The old man slowly turns around and draws Maria along behind him. Maria is fragrant with hay. She turns around once more. The wind becomes stronger.

I go over the gangplank. I can hear the old woman grumbling because she has been awakened. But Maria seems to undress without saying anything.

The meadow is damp. The wind is among the blades of grass. New stars have risen. At the well, I look back, but the barge has faded into the darkness. Then I go into the stable.

## BERKSHIRE COMEDY<sup>1</sup>

BY ALLAN SEAGER

**T**HE courtship began in the spring, the night after Skinner fell in the ditch. Every evening at six, George, the landlord, opened the door of the Greyhound and stood with one hand on the lintel, his permit above his head, *George Faulkner, Licensed to sell on these premises beer, ale, wine, spirits, and tobacco*, and one foot thrown over the other, he watched the workmen pass. They were men in caps with scarves around their necks, riding slowly by on bicycles, waving at George as they went. In the fields across the road, the farmers were leading their big teams toward the barns. After tea and a wash, they would return to the Greyhound, so many hods carried, so many joists put up, so many furrows drawn, to rest and drink beer and gossip and play games.

Mrs. George was upstairs making herself fine, combing out the tatts in her hair, putting on a layer of powder, and lastly inserting her teeth. In her youth, she had been a dancing teacher at Tooting, with small feet and ankles, and as the fading photo in the parlor showed, a little beauty. Her memory of those days was tough and hardy, and sometimes in the dusk at opening time, she would see her face as it had been then, if her teeth were in, and she would hold out her arms, the little finger crooked like the

genteel at tea, and she would waltz quietly around the room. All day she worked around the pub, sweeping and scrubbing, waxing the lino in the bar — a brown room with benches and a table, and four barrels behind the counter, two marked XX for bitter beer, two marked X for ale, and a fireplace with a shining steel fender — all day she worked without her teeth, her mouth drawn in and empty. At night, when she heard the voices of the first-comers, she descended, a string of bogus pearls around her neck, her bobbed hair combed and shining, and, firm on her gums, the teeth. Some people do not smile when they show their teeth, but Mrs. George did, and she knew it. She lifted her upper lip high, and at night the teeth almost exploded in your face, white as a bathtub and glittering. Pretty, they were, she thought. She and George were over sixty. Skinner was over sixty.

A little after six, Skinner would come up the road, limping slightly if the weather were damp. It was her legs — bad, they were, with verikus veins. She chewed on nothing as she walked. She wore a black hat, like the cloches a few years ago, only much bigger, and a black coat. When she came into the drive by the pub sign, George would say, 'Hello, artful,' and Mrs. George, 'And how's the rabbits, Skinner?'

'Them'll fetch sixpence apiece, them young uns, when they're a month old,' she said. And then with a bright smile, which showed no teeth but in the corners of her mouth, 'You know what I'd do if I had a fortune? A hundred quid, maybe?'

'Buy yerself a Paris gown,' said George.

'Shut up, you old fool, you,' said his wife.

Skinner folded her arms and settled them under her bosom in the comfortable way old women do, 'You know what I'd do? I'd buy me a little cottage and raise chickens and rabbits, and I'd keep a pig, and sometimes, do you know what I'd do, I'd go out and sleep with 'em where they was in the fields. I likes animals.'

Ten rabbits at sixpence, when they're a month old, are five shillings, and five shillings was a week's rent on the thatched cottage where Skinner lived. A few hens gave her eggs, and in the summer, she dug in a garden patch behind and grew green onions and radishes. When the hop season came, she would go away each morning in a big van that stopped by the village green and pick hops all day and chat with the pickers from London. She made five bob a day when she picked fast. She got the Old Age Pension, and with her job at the Greyhound, she lived as well as a wife, and saved money in the Post Office against her old age. As well as a wife but that she had no man now. Her husband had been a Black-and-Tan and had died in an alley in Dublin.

By six-thirty, the farmers and laborers had come and Skinner had lit the lamps and poked up the fire. The men sat at the table, each with his dominoes in his hands, wrists bent so he could see all nine at once and he only. Others sat on benches before the bar, always saving the warm end by the fire for Old Caleb and shouting at him in the broadest Berkshire.

‘Oi, ‘ee’ve od a drop a beer summat in ‘ee toime, ain’t ‘ee, Caaleb?’

A battered bowler, tinged with the green of age, on his head; two waistcoats under his jacket, and his old loose face propped on his hand on his stick, Old Caleb would look up and smile blissfully at the memory of all the full pint cups his ninety years had put before him — a bloody great line of them off over the horizon, past the war, past the Queen's death, past even the time Dizzy came through the village in an open carriage, and he would answer, ‘Oi. Thot I av, thyousands and thyousands of gallons.’

And Skinner would lean chattily over the bar, smiling broadly and showing her empty gums, ‘Why, Caleb, I’ve had thousands of gallons meself, and I’m young enough to be your daughter. Mebbe I am.’

‘Ay, Skinner, we knows yer a boozer.’

'Well, yer better off dead when ye gits to be my age without ye can get a good booze-up once in a while.' And she would draw herself a half-pint carefully and drink.

Then one of the dart-players would stop short in the midst of a throw and say, 'Psst, here he comes.'

The noise of a stick could be heard tapping against the cobbles outside, then against the steps, and the bar door would open and the talk would stop. Every night he came for his pint, Chris the cuckold. Feeling his way with his stick, he would get to a place on the bench and sit down. The farmers called him the 'Lord Mayor,' and chaffed him about his gout, his deafness, and his eyes which hardly saw. And they knew that while Chris sat, shouting as deaf men shout in answer, Creepy Parry was in his bed getting another child. They chaffed him because his wife was unfaithful, though he was too deaf and blind to know, but their jibes were never about her. They seldom mentioned women before Chris, any women, out of delicacy. They were polite.

'How's yer hands, Chris?'

'Eh?'

'How's yer hands, I say?'

'Bad, bad. I can't bend 'em over me stick.'

'Have another pint and worsen 'em.'

If one of the younger men were so bold as to ask in feigned politeness, 'And how's Mrs. Chris?' he would be nudged sharply in the ribs as if he had said something indecent. Mrs. Chris was thirty, tall and ruddy, and when she walked to the shops by the green, men in the fields stopped their horses to say good-day and watch her; and the little group of unemployed under the big tree on the green would pull themselves up and stand straight as if they too were men on whom her smile might light without waste. All the men thought she was beautiful, and as far as they ever dreamed of women, it was of her, walking slowly down by the pollards in a tattered skirt with her two-fathered children.

Creepy Parry they condemned or envied, condemned if they were thinking practically of the crops, the taxes, the vicar, or the government; or drunk, they staggered under a big moon through the shadows remembering courage and the war, and the stages of their youth, or perhaps, taking a bath in a tin tub on Saturday, they saw the muscles of their bodies nude and thought of the uses they were put to, then they envied Creepy.

When Chris, who sat long over his beer, had finished and stumped out, Mrs. George, to avoid the coarse talk which followed, would go genteelly into the parlor to sit with the wives. The men would say, 'Now you watch. It won't take him five minutes to git here.' And one of them might even pull out a watch to time Creepy.

In the parlor, the black hats of the women would nod together over the table; the whispers would come up and the titters; and then the hats would part and glasses go up to mouths.

'— and the other night when Chris was coming down the road, knocking with that stick, there was her youngest boy standing in the orchard, and when Chris come by, he ran into the house, calling out "Uncle Parry, Uncle Parry, here comes Father." And out come Creepy through the orchard a-buttoning up his clothes.'

'No, Chris never heard him. He can't hear.'

'Just like a guard to watch over his own mother's sin, he was.'

'And his own father's. That youngest boy ain't Chris's. He's the image of Creepy.'

The wives were bitter, for even at thirty they were faded, and the gout was coming in their hands, while Mrs. Chris remained fresh and pretty, even with poverty and six children to manage, smiling happily, a rival, and wicked.

While the men waited for Creepy to come into the bar, Skinner, bending grunting over the spigot, said contemptuously, 'Gertcha — Creepy's got more guts than any of ye. All of ye thinking of Mrs. Chris when yer a-lying by yer wives.' And then, giggling,

'Why don't none of ye think of me? I have a willing heart and I've slept alone fifteen years now.' She looked in the mirror which had *Alsopp's Ale* across the face in gilt letters, and pulled in a lock of her hair, and stroked her cheeks which were still red under the glaze of dirt, primping and giggling. The men laughed and turned to their dominoes and darts, when Creepy came in.

'Evening, all.'

'Evening, Creepy. Damp out tonight, ain't it?'

'Ay. Draw me a pint of bitter, Skinner.'

He was a mean-faced red little man, who had never been respected because he was the kind of man that women like instinctively. No one said much to him except in the arguments over the dominoes.

At ten o'clock, George would get up from the domino table and call, 'Time, gentlemen, please. Ten o'clock. Come along, please.' But the players would finish their game because they knew George kept the clock five minutes fast. And in a worried voice, he would call again, 'Time, gentlemen, please. Come along PLEASE. The policeman's waiting out there.' Perhaps one or two drunks would start a song, and slowly, reluctantly, the customers would leave. 'Good-night, George. Good-night. Pleasant evening. Good-night.'

When George had barred the door with a heavy bolt and closed the shutters all the residents of the Greyhound would go into the parlor, and Mrs. George would lay the table with bread, eight-penny rat cheese, and brown pickled onions, and they would sit down to eat, calling to Skinner, who was washing up the pint cups in the bar, 'Skinner, bring four ales and a glass of stout.' Down the road the farmers would be singing, and lamps would be lighted in the cottages. Skinner would bring in the drink and Dobbin, the plasterer, would turn on the wireless, — 'That's Roy Fox's band, playing in London,' — and they would all eat

and talk about the evening's trade, sometimes three pounds, sometimes five, and when Skinner had polished the last cup and dried her hands, she would come in.

'Git yer big feet outa the road, Jack.'

Jack had two corners where he sat — one in the bar evenings and Sundays, and one by the door of the parlor at suppertime. His feet were big and they hurt him most of the time. He would move them out of the way without speaking.

He seldom spoke. And three summers ago when that young artist gentleman stopped here the night, Jack's was the head he picked out to sketch. Jack was sixty-five years old and he looked like a king. To keep him until his span was done, he fed the hens at the Greyhound, and on Sunday mornings with a besom he swept the cobbles clean before the door, and pruned the ivy on the west side of the house so that Mrs. George might have a clear view of the road that led to the sea and watch for the cars of the gentry. As pay, he was given his bread and cheese, and beer, and a small pallet in the shed behind. What he remembered, sitting in his corners, no one asked, and as he seldom spoke, no one knew.

At midnight they would all go to bed, and Skinner, after a last gulp of beer, would go home. Mrs. George let her out each night by the kitchen door, and she would stagger off into the dark, cursing mildly when she tripped. The night before the courtship started, she had slipped and fallen on her back in six inches of muddy water in the ditch by the policeman's house. The whole of the next day, she told about it to all who came to the pub. It was an adventure, difficult of belief in a village where nothing happened but birth, marriage, death, and the seasons, and these common enough, and it was worth the repetition. 'And there I was a-lying on me back as if I was a baby.'

The next night when Mrs. George let her out, Jack came with her. Skinner started off in the moonlight lurching over the cobbles

and singing in a cracked voice about 'The Guardsman and Poor Mary,' and Jack followed her less recklessly and silent. A little way past the pub sign, standing creaking on its pole in the breeze, Skinner stopped and turned round, calling kindly, 'Come up here, Jack, and I'll sing to ye.'

Mrs. George said to her husband that night, 'Now what's come over Jack? He's seeing Skinner home. 'Twould be a funny thing if them two hit it off and made a match.'

Every night through the summer, Jack would accompany Skinner, never speaking except to warn her away from the edge of the road and to say good-night under the eaves of the thatched cottage.

And it was accepted by everyone that Jack was courting, although he never spoke to her as she bobbed around serving and joking in the bar. The domino players often turned to him where he sat, grave and silent, drawing slowly on his pipe with his pint on the bar beside him and ask, 'When you going to see the vicar, Jack?'

But it was no sport; Jack never took the bait, and they would leave Jack to twit Chris if he were there.

One night in midsummer, Skinner felt that Jack had squired her long enough. She said openly that as soon as the damp set in it would be cold sleeping alone, and when she would tell over what she would do with a fortune, a hundred quid maybe, the dart players would ask, 'Where you going to get a hundred quid given you, Skinner?' She would answer, 'Jack's going to give it me, ain't you Jack?' Then she would wink and put her hand over her mouth like a child to hide her laughter. Jack would merely look over at her soberly.

Jack had seen her home every night, and he had never denied it when she told the bar they were made for each other, and hinted that if Jack jilted her, perhaps old Chris would like her for his fancy lady, poor old Chris. She wanted Jack to propose formally, and he seemed unwilling, so she spoke out.

'Now, Jack, we shall play darts. And if you wins, you shall have me.'

Jack showed no surprise. He did not smile. He only pulled his mustaches. Skinner repeated the offer, and Jack at last said, 'Well.'

The dart players drew fresh chalk lines on the floor, and got out the new darts. They put up a lamp by the dart board on the wall, laughing with excitement.

When Jack toed the chalk mark to throw his first dart, he was trembling with shyness. It was a very poor game and Jack could not even hit the board; all his darts stuck in the wall beside it and he lost. Everybody laughed hard.

'He can't play darts, not even for a wife.'

'He don't want a wife, that's what.'

Skinner turned on them angrily, 'Shut up, all of ye. Jack never was much of a hand at darts, was you, Jack? We shall play dominoes and if you wins' — here she grinned — 'you shall have me.'

It is easier to lose deliberately at dominoes than at darts. Skinner lost and Jack won, and the whole pub shouted and stood them drinks. The banns would be cried first next Sunday and the wedding would be the day after Feast, Skinner said promptly. Jack went back and sat down again in the corner, studying his great sore feet.

When Feast Day came at the end of harvest, a little holiday, and Caleb could remember when they brought the last cut sheaf from the fields with a wreath around it, singing, a small fair was set up on the village green with coconut shies where you could pay twopence for three wooden balls to throw at coconuts standing on posts ten feet away, keeping all you knocked off, and penny rolling booths, and tents full of sweets, and gypsies selling things from baskets, and an old man with a talking parrot. All day Skinner drank in the kitchen of the Greyhound with the money

she won rolling pennies, and she led Jack around through the crowd, silent in a rusty black suit that was too small for him. That night everyone stood them port and sherry, and Skinner danced in the bar holding out her skirt, and after she teased him, Jack stood up once and kicked out one foot lamely, and then subsided in the corner.

At midnight, they were let out of the Greyhound after a gala supper, and they went staggering off down the road. There was a full harvest moon shedding a yellow light. People stood in the doorway shouting congratulations after them, and when the two were a little way down the road, Skinner shouted back, 'Maybe he'll tumble me in the harvest field.'

Jack put his arm around her to steady her, and when they came to the corner, they went into the harvest field, walking over the fresh stubble among the sheaves.

'What you so quiet about, Jack? Think it was yer funeral. Give us a kiss.'

Jack kissed her gloomily and then drew back and said, 'Skinner, I can't go through with this.'

'What yer mean "can't go through with this"? It's all done but the vicar's words tomorrow and getting bedded together like proper married folk.'

Looking at his toe, Jack said, 'You makes too free with the menfolk in the bar. Talking wickedness. All the men eyeing you. What if you was to turn out like Mrs. Chris?'

Skinner drew herself up, lifting her chin first one side, then the other, angrily. 'Me a harlot, Jack Belcher? Me what was an honest woman twelve years, 'fore I ever see you? I don't take that from no man, I don't.'

She marched off, holding herself very stiff and putting her feet down almost where she wished.

Without moving, Jack watched her go. Then he sighed and limped slowly back to the pub. When he saw a rook's nest in

the top of an elm, he reflected that it would be a cold winter, for when rooks build in the tops of elms, it's always a cold winter coming.

Skinner let herself into her cottage with a clatter, jerking the door and kicking chairs. She lit a candle, preparing to be sorrowful when her anger went away. She sat down at the table, with the candlelight making a humped shadow of her back against the wall, and she thought about the wickedness of men, chafing her hands. Her, an honester woman he never saw, what would have made him a good wife, and him thinking she would turn out a whore because she was cheerful with the menfolk and loved a bit of fun, a whore like that great strapping Mrs. Chris, a great lout of a girl that all the men eyed and wished to be in bed with—not that she blamed the men, for Mrs. Chris was a lovely bit, strong as a man, strong as a tiger. And Jack thought she would turn out like her, did he, a great lovely harlot? Lovely. And her sixty-three next Michaelmas, with no teeth in her head and there was her legs all covered with verikus veins and Jack thought she was lovely and all the men wanted her like Mrs. Chris.

Suddenly in the candlelight, Skinner began to laugh, rocking back and forth, hugging herself, laughing.

## BAD BOY FROM BROOKLYN<sup>1</sup>

BY MICHAEL SEIDE

**T**'HOUGH Louie Berk was dead for more than ten years his brother, Sam, would still say sometimes that if Louie had lived, *he* would have really amounted to something, because he had been by far the smartest one in the family. The romantic fact of Louie's early death (he was barely twelve when he died) had glazed his callow and wayward intelligence with the illusory sheen of genius. You can understand that. Just the same it is a bit queer to worry with such positive and posthumous praise a boy who has kept the peace for thousands of days in the same grave and who, for all we know, may have found truly sublime relatives to please. Besides, I often think it is ridiculous to speak hopefully of someone definitely dead, because it is like having faith in the power of a devil to undo an angel's work. People talk so much of heaven, and when someone finally gets there, they want to drag him back to earth and speculate on his chances of becoming a bloated millionaire or something brilliant on that order.

Louie had been a handsome kid, with a pure pale skin, gray mocking eyes, and an immortal cap he wore in style or out. He had been inconceivably inquisitive even for a boy of his age, and,

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by Louisiana State University.

consequently, terribly fresh. I remember that last summer of his life when he almost drove me nuts, following Sammy and me wherever we went, stood, or sat, an exasperating shadow, an inventive pest; and we had to drive him away a hundred times within the hour.

That driving-away business worries me a little even today. But it was something I did to Louie just before his death that really troubled me for a long time afterwards. But as soon as I learned to wrestle more glibly with cause and effect, whatever guilt I felt began to grow faint. And the flippant tone I put on as I talk about Louie can be attributed to a silly impulse to pay him off in his own coin now that he has become a sentimental memory rather than an accusing one.

A few months ago, just before Rosh Hashannah, I went with the family to visit my father's grave at the Montefiore Cemetery in Springfield, Long Island. As it happens, Louie is buried there too, and this time I decided to look him up. When we got to Montefiore, I went into the caretaker's office and asked the young lady there to tell me where I could find Louie Berk's grave. She asked me the year of his death and I told her approximately. While she was looking for Louie in the files, I looked her over. Through the tall Gothic windows I could see the gray silent shapes of monuments, above them the sky very blue and vacant, and everywhere the flurried shaking of leaves in the wind. No, she was not pretty. But she was sculptured in a very neat tailored style and looked so clean and smelled so fine: it was nice to find a young lady working in a cemetery. She handed me a slip of paper. Upon it was printed a map of Montefiore and neatly written in the proper spaces was Louie's name, the name of the society in whose plot he was buried (his father belonged to some branch of the Workmen's Circle), and the number of block, row, and grave. The young lady added her ample and sweet-smelling instructions and I said it would be a cinch, thanks very much.

But first, of course, we went to my father's grave. The mortality rate in his society had been terrific and it seemed there were more members underground than on it. His gravebed was very narrow, and the faintly chiseled monument at its head was tilted a bit as though after a nocturnal spree. We had brought along a pair of gardener's shears, and I clipped away at the cluttering weeds until I had raised a beautiful blister. But the grave did look more presentable, and we stood a while admiring its tipsy neatness. It was a fine clear day we had, with keen quivering sunshine and the cool wind of late summer. There were many miscellaneous birds around, and the little nitwits screamed and chirruped and flitted and swooped happy as the day is long. I took out the slip of paper and went to look for Louie's grave.

But Louie was not where he was supposed to be. So I ignored the directions on the paper and began to hunt for him on my own. At first I stepped from one headstone to another with respect and tiptoe decorum. But as my search progressed unfavorably, I became angry and very much less timid of the dead. The folks waited for me a while and, when they saw I had not found it yet, came over to help me. We climbed and trod many innocent graves of every age, shouted forgetfully to each other (my uncle cried out it was a perfect scandal), sweated, retreated, consulted, resumed, foraged through sand, gravel, and tangled grass, paused a moment each to decipher to the last fancy letter some intriguing monument, then became all increasingly angry, for the kid just wasn't there. 'Come on, for God's sake!' my sister finally said. 'You'll look for him some other time!' I was ashamed to go back to the nice young lady in the office, so I said I would try once more, and this time honeycombed a lot of territory. But Louie had literally vanished into the earth.

That kid was always hard to catch. I remember how I used to chase him after he had taunted me into scrambling pursuit. He

would always run down the basement of the apartment house in which he lived and would quickly lose me in those pitch-dark labyrinths through which he could scuttle with his eyes shut. I would stand there baffled, yelling like a nut: 'Come out, Louie, or I'll break your head! I'll break your head, Louie, if you don't come out!' It was strange how after ten years we seemed to be exactly in the same position.

But the futile search for his grave sent scuttling through my mind the simple and fluid details of Louie's last afternoon in the street. It was then it happened. Sammy and I (at fifteen a thousand years older than Louie) were on my stoop, talking with Rosie Bulbek (the darling! I wonder what's become of her fruity loveliness?) and Bessie Krohn. Louie pestered as usual. Girls always made him act very silly.

'Pull the chain!' he said, gently tugging at Bessie's blond rope of hair.

Bessie shook her head without turning around.

'Don't, Louie,' she said.

A second later Louie tugged again.

'Pull the chain!' he chortled.

'Louie, please!' said Bessie.

A third time.

'Will you stop?' cried Bessie, pushing him down a step.

'Louie!' said Sammy. 'Cut it out!'

Louie came up again and stood quietly a moment.

'Pull the chain!' he suddenly yelled, jerking sharply at that soft fascinating rope. Bessie screamed and clapped her hands to the back of her head. Louie scampered down the steps. Bessie watched him with blue astonished eyes.

'That kid brother of yours is certainly a nut!' she said to Sammy.

'Don't worry!' said Sammy. 'You just wait until I get him alone!'

'Hey!' Rosie yelled at Louie. 'Does your mother know you're out?'

Louie grinned: his mother certainly knew.

'You better not start up with him,' said Sammy.

'Yes,' advised Bessie loftily, 'just ignore him!'

'Did you go to the movies Saturday?' I asked Rosie.

'Did you?' she said.

'I did,' I said. 'Did you?'

'I did too,' she said.

Louie began to waltz himself around.

'Oh I did my dear did you did you!' he crooned, making excessive love to the air, then suddenly stopped and faced us. 'Wow!' he howled, jumping up. 'I'll say I did!'

'Louie!' cried Sammy.

Bessie stared blankly at Louie.

'I'll swear he's crazy!' she said.

'Whose little boy is that?' Rosie asked me as if she didn't know.

'Louie!' said Sammy, 'I'm asking you in a nice way. Please go away!'

'Aw, no!' said Louie.

'Go away!'

'You ought to put a plaster over his mouth,' said Bessie.

Sammy shook his head mournfully.

'That won't help,' he said.

'Aw!' said Louie. 'What am I doing anyways?'

'Go away!'

'Lemme stay, Sam, lemme stay,' said Louie. 'I won't do anything. I'll keep quiet. I promise.'

'All right,' said Sammy, sighing. 'But remember!'

Louie sat down on the bottom step and looked out on the street.

'What did you see?' I asked Rosie.

'See?' she said.

'At the movies,' I said.

'Oh!' she said. '*The Stranger at the Gate.*'

'Yeah?' I said. 'How was it?'

'It was wonderful!' she said.

'Where did you go?'

'Loew's.'

'Yeah?' I said. 'You went there?'

Louie had turned and was looking up at us, leaning easily on his elbow.

'Uhuh!' he said.

We all looked down.

'What's the matter with him now?' asked Bessie.

'My, my!' said Louie, beginning to smile.

'Louie!' cried Sammy.

'Wow!' said Louie, ogling ecstatically. 'What I see!'

Rosie suddenly screamed and hid behind me, tucking her skirt between her knees.

'Hey, dopey!' I said. 'Are you sick or something?'

'You're sick yourself!' he said.

'Gee!' said Rosie. 'He's a *bad* boy!'

'Why don't you stop bothering?' I said to Louie.

'Who's bothering you?' he said.

'You are!'

He grinned up at me.

'Why don't you stop playing with girls?' he said.

I walked down, pulled him to his feet, and pushed him away.

'Go on!' I said. 'Get the hell out of here!'

'Don't push!' he cried. 'Don't push!'

'Come on, come on!' I said. 'Nobody wants you around!'

'I'll stay here all I want!' he cried. 'You don't own the street!'

I kept pushing him back and I could feel how stiff his chest was and it maddened me.

'Go away, Louie,' I said, 'or I'll smack you one!'

'Oh, yeah?' he said. 'Yeah? You and who else?'

'Louie!' cried Sammy. 'Please go away!'

'Me, myself, and I!' I said.

'Yeah?' said Louie. 'Lemme see you! Lemme see you!'

He pushed his mocking little face into mine. Something in the expression of his eyes made me lose my head. I brought up my right fist in an uppercut and clipped him hard on the side of the jaw. He staggered back, wobbled, but held his feet, his mouth opening wide in pain and astonishment. I stared at him amazed at what I had done. He put his hand to his face and felt it gingerly, then sat down on the step and began to cry, tenderly caressing his jaw. My legs felt funny as I walked up the steps.

'You shouldn't have done that,' said Sammy. He was very pale.

'Aw, serves him right!' I said. 'He had it coming to him for a long time!'

Sammy slowly shook his head, his eyes on the ground.

'You shouldn't have hit him so hard,' he said.

'It's all right!' I said. 'It'll teach him a good lesson!'

He went down the steps to Louie.

'Are you all right, Louie?' he asked, touching him gently. Louie threw off his hand with a twist of his shoulders.

'Are you all right?' Sammy asked again.

'Lemme alone!' cried Louie. He got up and walked away, still holding his jaw.

Sammy watched him silently, then came up, shaking his head.

'You shouldn't have hit him,' he said. 'He's a sick kid.'

'Sick?' I said. 'What's the matter with him?'

Sammy tapped the left side of his chest significantly.

'His heart's not so good,' he said.

'I didn't know that,' I said. 'Since when?'

'Since last year when he had the gripe.'

'Gee, Sam,' I said, 'I didn't know that! I would never have hit him if I had known that!'

Sammy kept shaking his head and would not look at me.  
'I'm sorry, Sam,' I said. 'I didn't know that.'

He walked down without answering me and went home.

How was a guy to know? Sammy didn't have to get sore like that. I told Bessie and Rosie that, cross my heart I should hope to die if I lie, I didn't know Louie was a sick kid, otherwise I would never have hit him. But all the sympathy seemed to be with Louie and I felt like a fool, so I gave up trying to explain and went upstairs.

I had never hit him before. Sometimes (when I could catch and hold that eel) I would just shake or push him a little and threaten to break his head if he did it again, but I had never even slapped him. I was very sorry that I had lost my head, but then, when I remembered how he had pestered the life out of me all summer, I was not so sorry. And anyways, I reasoned, it wouldn't kill him, a little tap like that, he had it coming to him, always sticking his nose into other people's business, just that kind of a kid you hate like poison. No, I said to myself, I'm not sorry, remembering his snotty face and that stiff maddening chest I had pushed. But I was sorry just the same and wished I hadn't clipped him.

The next morning I had forgotten all about it and when I saw Sammy with two empty milk bottles on his way to the grocery, I greeted him naturally.

'Hi, Sam!' I said, getting into step.

'Hello,' he said.

I could tell at once by the way he answered me that he was still sore.

'Wanna go to Betsy Head for some basketball?' I said. 'I'll blow my ball up.'

'I can't,' he said.

'Why not?'

'Louie is sick.'

'Oh!' I said, my heart doing a tumble trick.

We walked along quietly until we came to the grocery.

'Listen, Sammy,' I said, just as he was about to go in, 'you know I didn't mean it. I'm sorry!'

'You shouldn't have hit him so hard,' he said, watching himself bump the bottles.

'Aw, now, Sam,' I said, 'how was I to know?'

'He told my mother he fell,' said Sammy. 'He didn't sleep all night.'

'I'm sorry,' I said.

He looked up at me and suddenly smiled.

'That's all right,' he said. 'You didn't know.'

I looked down in turn.

'So you can't go?' I said.

'No,' he said, 'I better hang around the house today.'

'Okay, then,' I said. 'See you tonight.'

He turned to go in.

'Listen, Sammy,' I said, touching and detaining him, 'tell Louie for me I didn't mean to hit him so hard, will you? Tell him I'm sorry, eh?'

'Sure,' said Sammy, 'I'll tell him.'

I thought everything would be as quickly forgotten as it had been forgiven. And that would have been the case if Louie had come down the next day, snotty as ever: but he did not. Instead, he kept to the house, obscurely ailing and, as Sammy told me, Louie just didn't feel right; nothing serious, but he couldn't eat or sleep well and Mrs. Berk thought it best that he keep inside a while, though she had not called the doctor because she hated to part with the two dollars she didn't have unless it was absolutely necessary, and then again, at first Louie didn't seem much different from usual. Anyway, Sammy is a funny kind of a guy and never says much, so I never knew just what was wrong with Louie or how he felt from day to day. But Louie's absence worried me. If I could only see him in the street and chase after him a bit or

even call him a little stinker and tell him to scram, just once more, it would have made me feel so much better. And though Sammy never said anything about my hitting Louie, it seemed to me, as the days passed and Louie didn't show up, that with that one clip I had put him away permanently.

I did not go up to Sammy's house all this time, though before this I could be found there at least once a day. I did not want to go up there and face Mrs. Berk, who was a nice woman and never seemed to get angry and who had always treated me swell. I suppose she suspected something. But I felt that Louie hated me and I could hardly blame him after what had happened, so I was glad when Sammy never asked me to come up to the house with him. I had a famous fight with Fishface Bloom and knocked out a couple of his teeth, but that didn't help much. I felt like destroying something or someone and took out a lot on my kid sister until my mother slapped me, and that was something I could not easily forgive because I was no longer a baby to be slapped like that. Yet things seemed to be the same on the surface, and Sammy and I were good friends and became even better friends with Rosie and Bessie. That summer we were all deeply in love.

Then one evening after supper, Sammy came over to my house and said that Louie wanted to see me.

'Me?' I said, getting very red. 'He wants to see *me*?'

'Yeah,' said Sammy. 'He said so.'

'What about?'

'I don't know,' he said. 'He said you should come up.'

'Come up now?' I said. 'Right now?'

'Sure,' he said.

'Okay,' I said. 'I'll go.'

When we got to Sammy's house, Mrs. Berk, at the kitchen sink, smiled at me. Mr. Berk got up from the table.

'Hello, Mrs. Berk,' I said.

'Hello, Joey.'

'Hello, Mr. Berk.'

'Hello, Joey,' said Mr. Berk. 'How are you?'

'I'm fine, Mr. Berk.'

He came over, a short jovial man with a great halo of hair, and clapped me on the back: good old Joey!

'We haven't seen you for a long time,' he said.

I looked down and did not answer.

'He's been very busy,' smiled Mrs. Berk.

'How's Louie feeling?' I asked her.

She nodded her head quickly and pleasantly.

'He's all right,' she said, 'he's all right!'

'Come on,' said Sammy.

Louie was propped up in bed, reading an *Argosy* magazine. He looked up as I came in and smiled at me very gently and very strangely. I could hardly recognize him. His face had become very broad and somewhat flatter, and there was a peculiar flabbiness about his yellow jaws. He wore a cap.

'Hello, Louie,' I said. 'How are you feeling?'

I walked over and took his outstretched hand.

'Hya, kid!' I said.

'I guess I'm all right.'

Sammy went out.

'So you're feeling all right?' I said, still holding his hand.

He gave mine a slight reassuring squeeze.

'Sit down, Joey,' he said.

I sat down close to the bed.

'Say!' I said. 'You look fine!'

He eyed me quizzically.

'I really don't feel so good,' he said. 'I hate to stay in bed.'

'Sure,' I said. 'I know how it is. It's lousy to stay in bed.'

'Will you have some fruit?' he said. Then before I could answer: 'Ma! Mamma! Please bring Joey some fruit!'

'Aw, don't bother, Mrs. Berk!' I said. 'I just had supper!'  
'Bring some, Ma!'

The room smelled fuzzy from lack of air. On the dresser, beyond the bed, stood a half-empty bottle of medicine with a spoon alongside. Otherwise there was no sign that this was a sick room. Louie was half covered with a blanket.

'Aren't you warm?' I said. 'With that?'

He shook his head. He was not warm. He lay back and shut his eyes.

'Why didn't you come before?' he said.

'You know why,' I said.

'You thought that I was sore?'

'Yeah.'

'That was all right,' he said. 'I'm a fresh kid.'

'You're not fresh.'

'I am,' he said. 'I'm glad you socked me.'

'No, Louie, that was wrong.'

'It was a good thing,' he said. 'I deserved it.'

He sounded like a very old and tired man.

'I'm sorry, Louie, I really am!' I said. 'I would never have hit you if I had known!'

'It's all right,' he said. 'It was all my fault.'

Mrs. Berk came in with a bowl of fruit. Louie opened his eyes and raised himself on his elbow. He smiled strangely at his mother, and she returned his smile in the same strange way.

'Go ahead, Joey,' said Louie, sinking back. 'Have something. What'll you have? An apple? An orange? A banana? Have a banana.'

I took a banana and began to peel it.

'Doesn't he look fine?' said Mrs. Berk.

'Sure,' I said, munching, 'he looks swell!'

She took off his cap, brushed back his hair, put the cap on again.

'He's a good boy!' she said. 'An angel!'

She softly stroked his face, then began to adjust the bedclothes about him while he kept following her with his eyes. I ate the banana and watched them smiling at each other. After a minute, I felt they had forgotten all about me.

'I guess you're tired,' I said, standing up. 'I better go.'

No one said I should stay.

'Good night, Louie,' I said. 'I hope you feel better.'

'Good night, Joey,' he said. 'Come up tomorrow and we'll play some checkers.'

'I'll come tomorrow,' I said. 'Good night, Mrs. Berk.'

'Good night, Joey,' she said. 'Come again.'

'I will,' I said. 'Good night.'

'Good night.'

I did come the next day. But I never played checkers with Louie — for he died that same night. What is death? I asked myself that day ten years ago. I was only a kid. I said to myself, Louie is dead. What does that mean? I did not know how to answer myself. For that matter, what the hell do I know about it today? But death, I felt then, was not a person or even a thing. It was a vast and funny feeling that spread into, flooded and tinted the day. I told the day that Louie was dead and it returned me that feeling. Death was, also, an expression on a face: shock into terror into disbelief into awful sadness. Louie is dead, I told Rosie, and she returned me that expression. I had a special power that day. I went around with a phrase. Hey, Fishface! Did you hear? Louie is dead. The expression writhed again. I told my mother and she looked at me in the same terrible way. But then she became a bit noisy and disordered and I did not like that. I liked the tail-end of that expression: the resignation, the dignity even in a kid, the dense melancholy that no amount of summer sunshine could brighten. That's strange. I said I liked it. And I was thinking then of death. I must have been crazy.

They buried Louie so early the next morning that I missed the funeral altogether. When I came downstairs and found out it was all over, I felt very bad. I went back upstairs and lay down on the unmade bed and tried to sleep. I lay that way all morning and my mother kept coming in and out the room, but said nothing. Late in the afternoon, we had a big thunderstorm, and when it was over, I went downstairs and hung around the corner hoping maybe Sammy would come down. It was getting dark when I saw him come slowly down the steps.

I went to meet him.

'Hello, Sammy,' I said, and my voice trembled.

He passed me silently. I walked after him.

'Where you going?' I asked.

He shrugged his shoulders: he didn't know and he didn't care. I caught up with him and fell into step. His eyes were red and swollen and he looked haggard and I felt something sting my chest and I looked away. Soon he began to cry very quietly to himself. His hands were stuck in his pockets and he let the fat warm tears trickle unheeded down his freckled nose. I put my arm across his shoulders.

'Louie!' he sobbed. 'Louie!'

I gripped him tighter, turning my face away.

'He was only a kid!' he cried.

'Sammy, please!'

'Only a little kid!'

'Sammy!'

'I know! I know!' he cried. 'Everybody thought he was a snotty kid! They were always chasing him and calling him names! The damn fools!' He turned to me. 'You didn't know him like I did, Joey,' he said in a changed voice. 'He wasn't a fresh kid. He was smart. He was never fresh in the house. My mother liked him better than me. Honest, she did! Do you know what she used to call him? Angel!' He looked away and cried

out bitterly: 'And in the street they called him a bad boy! Bad boy! He was the best one, Joey, the best one of the whole bunch!'

He straightened proudly: the best one!

I removed my arm from his shoulders.

He blew his nose and wiped his eyes angrily: the best one of the whole goddamn bunch!

Pride covered over his grief and he grew quiet. It was dark now and we walked haphazardly for about an hour until we began to feel tired, so we sat down on some lumber stacked near the curb on Powell Street. We faced the gutter, gratefully resting under the yellow glare of the street light. The rain had flooded the sewer on the opposite corner and the one near us was hungrily drinking in a stream of dark dirty water. It was interesting to watch how smoothly and brightly the water moved. But after a while, I began to feel restless. We had often played poker with automobile license plates and, as I sat there watching the cars pass, I began to play the game with myself.

'Look at that,' I said, pointing. 'There goes a full house!'

But Sammy did not look up. He raised his head slightly and spat into the stream, then sadly watched the pure white flower of his spit as it floated out of sight down the sewer.

## EUSTACIA<sup>1</sup>

BY JESSE STUART

**I**'LL show 'em,' says Theopolis Pratt, 'that they can't put it over on me. I'll show 'em the state can't put a new road through here and take my bottom land and cut my trees. The first man that puts the axe in one of them trees 'll feel the buckshot in a slat of his ribs. The first man that sticks a road-scraper, a pick, mattock, or shovel in that bottom 'll get a dose of lead he can't carry.'

Theopolis means what he says. If you could see the man he is. His great massive shoulders, his arms big as fence posts, his muscles that bulge up and split his shirt-sleeves, his powerful bull neck, firm-set iron jaws, and his eyes blue as the Tygart waters that swirl past his door.

'I've been here, Mel, in these hills a long time,' says Theopolis. 'I've seen people come and go. I've seen them whipped. I've seen them killed. I've seen one family run over another. But they don't run over the Pratts, do they? They won't run over the Pratts long as I can use my fists. When I can't use my fists and whip them I can use something else. I'll fight in the open long as I can. And when they outnumber old Theopolis I can take to the cliffs and pick 'em off. They'll have to put that road over my

dead body. Put a brand-new schoolhouse right in my door! They can't do it!"

"W'y, Theopolis," says Mel, "they'll put that road through there. The state is too powerful. They'll send out men to 'praise your land and take it. They'll pay you for it.'

Mel, a big black-headed man, wheezes on his pipe. He is sitting with Theopolis under the apple tree by the country store where two roads meet. Theopolis is whittling a stick of wood with a hawk-bill knife. Mel Sperry is whittling with a fifteen-cent brown-handled barlow. The blue smoke swirls above them through the green branches of the tree.

"We don't lie about things," says Theopolis. "We come out flat-footed and get it over with. Pap was always that way. That's the Pratts. We boast a little. But we make our boasts good."

Theopolis blows out another wisp of smoke. "I've seen too much of that fangle-dangle education come here," he says, "too much for no good. Getting away from the abc's we's used to, Mel. W'y, all we had was writin', readin', and 'rithmetic. Good enough for anybody's youngins."

"Good enough for mine," says Mel. "No need for a new school. The old schoolhouse will do. No use spending a lot of the taxpayers' money for foolishness. Of course I'm not 'gainst education, you know. I'm just 'gainst these new things."

"I got seven children by my first wife, and five by my second," says Theopolis, "and all the first children are married off and gone. Got the second litter with me. Durned if I send my little girls to school if I don't want to. They are my children and I'll do as I please with 'em. When I go upon the hill to get wood or haul fodder I like to have my children right with me. W'y, that little one of mine's a Pratt up and down. I say to her: "Sarah, you go fetch your Pap a drink." She'll say: "If you want a drink of water, get up and get it yourself." I tell you she's my best girl.

Just a little Pratt up and down.' Theopolis would laugh a husky, strong laugh, like the wind in the fodder blades in January.

Sarah says: 'Where you going, Pap?'

'Ah, honey,' says Theopolis, 'just going out for a little walk. Going out to fish a little. Come along with me.'

Sarah goes with her pa — Sarah, Fern, and Eustacia. They get their fishing poles and a can of bait. They go down beside the Tygart. The percoons blossoms now in the coves beside the Tygart, rich beds of this snow-white flower, Kentucky's prettiest springtime flower. The trailing arbutus vines on the rough shaggy cliffs. Elms and water birches are thin-leaved and the sycamores are budding leaves. The sycamores have white and brown trunks and the portions of their bodies are the color of a bluebird's beak. They are pretty in the April wind.

'Fish when I please,' says Theopolis; 'don't my land run down to the creek? Who's going to stop me when I want a mess of fish? I tell you this country's getting too many people in it and too many of this too-many are busybodies.' He sits on the bank and drops his hook and line into the water. The girls fish with him.

Theopolis leaves Eustacia, Fern, and Sarah at the house. He lights his pipe and walks across the bottom. 'I've kept 'em out so far,' he says to himself. 'Not a shovel nor a mattock will they stick in this earth.' Theopolis walks behind a blue stream of smoke, bluer than the wind of April. He walks over to the old tie yard by the railroad tracks. Three men are sitting on a tie pile. One is playing a guitar and all are singing. Theopolis walks up and he says:

'Boys, I like your music.'

'The devil you do,' says one. 'You old buzzard, who told you to open your bill?'

'My bill is my own,' says Theopolis, 'and I'll open it and close it when I get good and ready. If you've got anything to say about it, why don't you say it?'

'I got a lot to say,' the little mean-looking man says. 'I'll show you what a man is.' He makes for Theopolis. Whow! and Theopolis piles him on the ground with a left. Wow! over Theopolis's head the guitar is splintered in a hundred pieces.

'What is this, a fight?' says Theopolis. Down goes the man that used the guitar.

'Come on, you young sprouts,' says Theopolis; 'your old Theopolis Pratt's just started to fight.'

'Oh, you have?' says the third young man as he pulls a thirty-eight in Theopolis's face. 'You might be big as the side of a mountain to the other boys on the ground, but you're nothing to me. You're no bigger than an ant. Stand there or I'll blow your brains out.'

'You wouldn't shoot a man in a little friendly fight,' says Theopolis, 'when three young men are fighting an old codger like me.' Before the man can speak, Theopolis goes into a tussle with the young man. The gun fires and shoots Theopolis across the wrist. The second time it fires, it shoots the young man through the heart. Theopolis says: 'Didn't mean to kill the man. I ought to a-been at home — but just to think people won't let you 'tend to your own business any more.'

He darts behind the tie piles with half-bricks hurled at him. Theopolis's arm is bleeding — and two young men are after him. Theopolis makes it home tired and sick.

'What's the matter, Papa?' says Fern.

'Nothing, honey,' says Theopolis, gazing in the embers in the cookstove and punching them with a poker. 'I'm just hungry and want my supper.'

They see the sheriff come and arrest their father and take him away. They put him under bond, but death came in the meantime and took him out of his troubles. 'Only thing in the world,' says Mel Sperry, 'that let Theopolis Pratt out'n all his trouble was when he cashed in his checks. Old moonshine licker was a

friend to Theopolis, after all. It eat the lining out'n his stomach. He kicked the bucket in time. Left a good family, though. Never heard a ought 'gainst one of his girls in my life nor 'gainst his wife. I tell you moonshine ain't no friend to man but it was a friend to Theopolis. Had one trial and it was a hung jury. Was getting ready for another trial and death settled it. Old Theopolis sleeps upon the hill now.'

'No, he didn't leave anything for his wife and children. Was a poor man. He was one of the best neighbors I ever lived by in my life. It's a shame — and his wife with five children. Don't know how they'll make it. Nothing to go on. He's got a fine bunch of little girls.'

Theopolis sleeps where his kin have slept for nearly two centuries. There are soldiers among them, tillers of the earth, fighters among them and lovers of peace. He sleeps while the scrapers turn loads of new dirt into the fills — while the plows trailed new furrows and blazed a new highway. He sleeps where the click of the pick and the shovel are listless as the fall of the autumn leaves to the earth.

'I don't want relief,' says Sallie Pratt. 'I want work.' She gets work at two dollars a week in a kitchen. She has to sell her cows. She keeps the wolf from the door. Two dollars a week is a small sum. Relief has to come whether she wants to take it or not.

'I'll tell you Sallie Pratt is a good woman. Look how she hangs on to her children. Look how she works and what she works for and keeps her children together. She is in church every Sunday morning. You will find her there. She's a good religious woman. Two dollars a week don't go very far when a woman has five mouths to feed at home.'

Even the new schoolhouse comes right across the Tygart on a hill. It is a brown-brick school building with sixteen acres of playground on a hill top where the water runs from all sides equally. The Tygart comes down from the Kentucky hills and

faces the Ohio River. The schoolhouse stands here, a monument to the community.

When the sassafras leaves begin to turn on the Kentucky hills anyone knows that summer is ended. Anyone living in Kentucky knows when the farewell-summers begin to bloom it is time to start cutting corn and digging potatoes in Kentucky. This is what Professor Stringer sees when he returns in September to take his school. He is proud to be back with a young river of humanity.

It is in the algebra class that Professor Stringer notices a slender frail girl with blue eyes. She sits in the second seat in the first row from the wall. When he asks for daily work she always answers that she has done all of her assigned work. When he sends students to the board she always works her problem with accuracy. She has but a few words to say. When he gives an algebra test she never makes anything but A grades. Her name is Eustacia Pratt. One day Professor Stringer reads the grades for the algebra test. He says: 'Eustacia Pratt, go.' She speaks up and says: 'Didn't I make 100?' And he says: 'No, Eustacia, you made 90.'

When the class is over she comes up and says: 'May I see my paper?'

Professor Stringer says: 'Yes, if you'll go over there and dig it out of the waste-paper basket.'

She goes over and finds her paper. She hands it to him and says, 'Look at the problem you marked wrong.'

Professor Stringer looks over the problem and finds he has made a mistake and graded the paper wrong. She has made 100.

He finds Eustacia so accurate that he lets her work in the office. She is a freshman. Once she says: 'I have two sisters and they are as good or better in their books than I am. They'll be up here some day. They are in the grades now.'

Professor Stringer lets Eustacia make out transcripts of grades

and eligibility lists. He finds her to be one of the most reliable girls of a long list he has had to do office work before for him. She is only in her first year of high school and she looks so lean and frail and like she will fall every step she takes. 'W'y, all the Pratts are smart,' a student told him once. 'Eustacia is just like the rest of them.'

As the year goes on he becomes interested in the girl because of her remarkable ability to do things in books. She has an undaunted spirit and precocious intellect wrapped up in her tall frail body. Once he asks her about her father. Her face colors and she says: 'My father is dead.' That was all she would say.

And the year goes on. Eustacia's grades come into the office each six weeks. They are all A's. Once a group of girls come to school the first period and do not go to class. They loaf in the basement. Professor Stringer is told by a teacher that they are loafing in the basement. Eustacia is working in the office at this period. One of the girls says: 'Professor Stringer, Eustacia told on us.'

Eustacia walks in and says: 'Did she say that I told on her? If she did I'll pull every hair out of her head.'

When Professor Stringer goes home he tells his landlady about Eustacia Pratt wanting to fight. 'W'y, she comes by it honest,' says Mrs. Failford. 'Haven't you never heard of old Theopolis Pratt? Dead and gone now but, honest, that man would fight a running sawmill.'

The year has passed away as swiftly as it has come. Spring comes again to the hills. The school year is over and the year of A's, B's, C's, D's, and F's are recorded and put on dry files behind locks and keys. And the boys and girls go back to their homes on the farms.

Eustacia often comes to Professor Stringer's mind while he works during the summer on his own farm. He wonders about her people and the struggle her mother has to send her to school.

School starts the second year. Eustacia comes back to work in the office. She has grown a little. This year Professor Stringer teaches third-year English. He doesn't have Eustacia in his class as she takes second-year English. Eustacia is growing now. She is a tall girl and slender, taller than her mother. Her mother is making four dollars a week now. She has been given a double raise in salary.

The leaves swiftly turn brown again. The autumn winds and rains come. Leaves float like golden ships on some strange and far-off voyage down the Tygart. Eustacia walks home each afternoon beside the Tygart. She sees the cornfields and the giant beech trees beside the Tygart. She sees the brown autumn-cupped leaves floating down the swift dark waters of the Tygart. She thinks: 'Every dead leaf is a golden ship going to some far and distant land. Some day I shall be going beyond these hills. I shall be a golden leaf on the Tygart. I shall go to college. I shall be a leaf floating on a swift stream of water away from the hills.'

Spring passes and the second year of school sinks into the past as the sun sinks over a hill and is gone forever. The boys graduate from the school and leave. Some go to college, others go to work. Boys go home from the school and start work between the handles of the plow. They start work with hoes chopping weeds from the corn and hoeing the cane and tobacco. They work under the skies that float above Kentucky's green hills. Professor Stringer goes back to his farm to follow the plow again.

Autumn comes again to the hills. The sassafras leaves start turning red in early September. The pigskin tumbles end over end through the air. The boys and girls are back. Eustacia is back in the office. She is taking English III. She asks Mr. Stringer for novels to read. He lets her have them. She can wade through a novel with the ease of a blowing wind where the bottom corn is cut. She is growing swiftly into womanhood now as a plant grows into maturity in its season.

Eustacia finds a rival in English III. Little fair-haired blue-eyed Freeda Blank watched Eustacia Pratt keenly. When objective tests are given, Freeda always captures the lead in her class by one or two points. Eustacia always comes second. The two girls lead the class by a good margin of points. Professor Stringer heard Eustacia say: 'If I did like one or two in that class, I could make good grades, too.' The next test he puts both girls in front seats. The grades are as usual; Freeda leads by one or two points. Eustacia just can't surpass her. Both girls made A's, but that isn't it. Eustacia just can't stand to be beaten.

Once Professor Stringer says to Eustacia in the office: 'Why is it I never hear you speak of your father?'

'I loved my father,' says Eustacia. 'I love the name of him better than the name of any one I know. I love the memory of him. The three men he had the fight with, if I knew them, I'd like to take a club and go in on them. I'd like to whip them right.' Her face flushed red and then the blood left her cheeks. They grew pale again.

N.Y.A. jobs are offered in the schools, and Eustacia Pratt is an A student and her family has been on relief. She is past sixteen years and meets the qualifications. She gets paid for work the first time in her life. She continues work in the principal's office and makes six dollars a month now. How proud she is to make it!

The autumn again swiftly passes into winter, and the winter passes into spring. The trees get green again. The hills that overlook the Tygart are budding again as the white showers of spring streak their sleeping bare bodies and wash the bark clean. The oaks are budding and the maples, water-birches, sycamores, and elms. The apple trees start blooming and the percoons whitens the coves where the blue waters of the Tygart run swiftly down fern-infested channels.

Professor Stringer walked up the path by the Tygart. Where an apple tree stood in the front yard white with blossoms, and

an orchard of blooming trees on a steep bank at the back of the house, he saw a group of children at play. He immediately recognized one as Eustacia Pratt. She came running out to the road.

‘Come up, won’t you?’ she says.

He walks up to her house. He is invited in by her mother, Mrs. Pratt. She is a small, lean woman, who looks unable to work. He wonders how a woman so lean and frail can do housework at four dollars a week and keep five children.

Spring passes again and the school has closed. Another part of the youthful river of humanity has flowed to its destiny. The teachers and the students go home. Professor Stringer goes away to school. He does not go back to the farm. It is books again and new methods in school work to take back to the students. A letter comes to him from Eustacia. The letter says:

‘I got a job staying in a kitchen this summer at four dollars a week. The bedbugs nearly ate me up. I packed up and left. I got a better place to stay but with less pay. I only get two dollars a week.’

Kentucky again, with the farewell-summers in bloom and the sassafras slowly turning on the bluffs. The pawpaws are turning along the fencerows from green to golden. School has started again. The teachers are back in their places. Eustacia is back in the office. She has bloomed into womanhood now as a plant reaches full maturity.

‘The future of a country depends upon women like Eustacia,’ thinks Professor Stringer. ‘They shall some day give birth to sons and daughters and they shall be the builders of our destiny. It is in the durable flesh and blood, the honest flesh and blood that will do or die, that will work and sweat, and the fearless and the hopeful on which our destiny depends.’

Eustacia takes English IV under Professor Stringer. He finds her gradually creeping up on Freeda Blank. That rivalry isn’t over. Whether Freeda wants to be Eustacia’s rival or not, she

accepts her as one and proceeds. Eustacia now edges Freeda out by one or two points and leads her class. 'I never saw such fight in a girl student. She's a tremendous fighter. That girl can do things. I admire her. I wish I had a school with a thousand students just as good as she is.'

The autumn passes and winter comes, when the Kentucky hills are white with a blanket of snow. Birds chirrup plaintively in the bull grass by the Tygart. Blue sheets of ice span the Tygart and the skates ring out a merry echo against the frozen hills.

The winter days recede and spring comes again, a glorious burst of spring in Kentucky. The deep velvety green comes again in April — blue skies and snow-white blooming percoons. There was a streak of heavy green foliage up the Tygart, where the trees along the water course leaf earlier than the sturdy oaks that grow on the hillsides. The blue swirling water of the Tygart runs swiftly down its green-lined banks.

'Eustacia,' says Professor Stringer, 'Mrs. Maxwell has checked your grades and finds that you have the second highest grades. Freeda Blank edged you out by the fraction of one honor-point. I've written to Benton College to get application blanks for you. You'll have to take a stiff entrance examination, too. Many try to enter that institution but few are chosen. It's a school where you can work the biggest portion of your way.'

Eustacia smiles and says: 'I'm not afraid of the examination. I'll need a little money. I'll work this summer. I've got the promise of four dollars a week cooking and doing housework for Mrs. Blair. I can just get some clothes with that money. But Uncle Jarvis Pratt says I can't go to college. He's been talking to Mom about it.'

'What's he got to do with it? Is he your guardian?'

'No,' says Eustacia, 'but you'd better come over and talk to Mom about it. Uncle Jarvis says he wants to see you about it. He's just raising Cain!'

'I'll help you to raise a little money,' says Professor Stringer. 'I'll help you all I can. Instead of your Uncle Jarvis trying to keep you from going to college he ought to be trying to send you.'

Eustacia fills in the application blanks. Mrs. Maxwell gives her the entrance examination. 'W'y, she took the test in one-half the time the college allows. She waded through those questions with all the ease in the world. It was some test too! Eustacia Pratt is one of the best students in this school.'

Before Eustacia hears from the examination Professor Stringer walks over again to see Eustacia's mother. 'Mrs. Pratt, I want to know if you are Eustacia's guardian. Does her Uncle Jarvis Pratt have anything to do with her going to college or does he not? Eustacia tells me he doesn't want her to go.'

'Mr. Stringer,' says Mrs. Pratt, 'I'm Eustacia's guardian. Her Uncle Jarvis has nothing at all to do with her. I would love to see her go to college. She's made up her mind to go and there's not much that can stop her. I'll just tell you the whole story why her Uncle Jarvis is trying to keep her from college. This house we are living in belonged to my husband Theopolis Pratt before he died. It was mortgaged. When Theopolis died, his brother Jarvis took the mortgage on himself to pay. My husband had the place nearly paid for. Now with the mortgage and the interest that has accumulated on it, the whole thing amounts to something over five hundred dollars. Jarvis wants to get Eustacia a job in town in the shoe factory to start paying on this debt. Either in the shoe factory or working in somebody's house. It isn't fair to Eustacia, for she didn't make the debt. And Jarvis Pratt is not a poor man. He owns something like seventeen houses that he rents. We don't pay any rent here. We can hold this house until Sarah is twenty-one. She's eleven now. We can stay here ten years longer and Jarvis can't do anything about it nor can he make us pay the debt. He'll get this property in the end, anyway.'

Professor Stringer walks up the hill where sleeps Eustacia's

dead — the dust she is made of for many generations. 'Theopolis is sleeping now. The green hair of April entwines above his sleeping dust. The crows fly over and caw-caw the dreams of a thousand years to the green hair of April. Ah, the secrecy of the green hair of April, what are the dreams it hides? The thousand water-bubbles of bursting dreams? The million dreams of humanity lost in the cobwebs of time, spun on the invisible stuff that dreams are made of! Theopolis is not dead. Theopolis, the fighter, the dreamer, the fisherman, the boozer, lives on. Thanks to him, sleeping under American skies on a Kentucky hill, for the blood he left in Eustacia's veins. Theopolis lives on in a new day.'

'I'm going to tell you, young man,' says Jarvis Pratt, 'that you've got no business prying into my family affairs. You put the idea of college in that girl's head. You know she's too young to send off to Benton College. You stay out of the Pratt affairs!'

'She's too young to enter college, but yet she's old enough to get down on her knees and scrub out five hundred dollars for you at four dollars a week! She's too young to enter college, but old enough to start work in the factories! I know why you don't want her to enter college. I've just seen her mother. She told me the whole story. Eustacia Pratt is going to college if she passes the entrance examination.'

'Now listen to me, young man,' says Jarvis Pratt, puffing at his cigar, 'I want you to get this right now. I've got friends in town. I can get her a job in some office. She can use a typewriter, can't she!'

'Yes,' says Professor Stringer, 'but not to compete with the graduates of the business college over there, and they are standing in a queue waiting for jobs. What chance has she? Her best bet is college and there is where she is going. You ought to be ashamed. You with a wrinkled face and white hair. You with enough to do you the rest of your days. Life is before her. Her

father is in the earth. You are his own brother. You ought to help to pay her way in college. You rent seventeen houses.'

'What's the use sending a girl to college?' asks Jarvis Pratt, puffing his cigar again. 'Just go and get married. Her old dad if he was alive wouldn't want her a-gallivanting off down there to college. He wouldn't have it either. I've kept them children in a home up there ever since he's been dead. They look to me like I was their father and they'll listen, too.'

'This is one of the times they won't listen. And in the end you get the property that was three-fourths of the way paid for. So I can't see as you've helped them very much.'

'Well,' says Jarvis, 'the Pratts have always got along, haven't they? Yes, and they never went to college. It's just a lot of foolishness. She'd better be at work than gallivanting there. She's learnt enough up there in the high school. Besides, the way I see this, it's none of your business. You are interfering with our private affairs.'

'A high-school principal has the right to interfere when he has seen the struggle of Eustacia Pratt for the last four years. Lots of times she just had bread and water to eat. Those children would go home and go to bed hungry. Yet she stands right at the head of her class.'

Professor Stringer walks away. He leaves Jarvis blowing cigar smoke to the wind under a cluster of locust trees. He walks up the railroad to the post office. There he sees Eustacia. She is holding a letter in her hand. She runs to meet him. She says:

'I'm accepted. I'm accepted. I passed with a good grade. I'll get to college. I'm the first of my people. Uncle Jarvis can't stop me either. I didn't make the debt, and, besides, if I ever have to pay it I can pay it quicker teaching school than I can scrubbing floors.'

Professor Stringer looks beyond the hills that have held Eustacia and her people. He sees Eustacia on the train. She is

leaving now. She is going to a bigger dream. It is bigger than the school by the Tygart. He can see her on the street with many young women. They are not better-looking girls than Eustacia. Their eyes are not bluer. They are not any straighter. They certainly are not any stronger. Few will be better students! She is laughing on the streets now with her friends. She is living her dream of pride, joy, fulfilment. She feels the strength of her native Kentucky hills.

## THE CRAZY GUY<sup>1</sup>

BY HARRY SYLVESTER

**Y**ES, sir, I been working in nails ever since I was a kid. Started out running errands for the company when I was a kid and went into the factory when I was seventeen. No white-collar jobs for me. Never did like a tight feeling around my neck.

No, I'm not a union man. There ain't no unions down to Peerless Nail & Wire. No, I didn't try to do no organizing. I just had a job and wasn't bothering nobody. Yeah, I was there when that Stanislowski thing happened. That's how come I was fired after being there so long and in line for a foreman's job and everything.

Who, me a Red? Hell, no. And he wasn't either. He was a Catholic. I used to see him at Mass every Sunday. You can't be a Communist and a Catholic at the same time. And this Stanislowski was a Catholic. Then why was I fired? Well, if you want to hear it, I'll tell you, but it's a pretty long story. Thank you, I will sit down.

Of course, there ain't no use in talking too much about it. It's all over and he's dead and I'm fired but maybe it can do some good because then you'll know why they canned me after fourteen years when I didn't do nothing wrong at all. And if you'll give

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by Esquire-Coronet, Inc.

me a chance I'll show you that I know nails. I can take one of them old-style machines right apart for you and put it together again. You got the old-style machines, ain't you? I was hoping so. Them new ones — that's why Stanislowski got killed and why I got fired and why a lot more guys'll be out of jobs.

Yeah, I'd heard that — that you were going to keep on with the old-style machines so long as you could make a go of it. That's damn white, I mean it. That's why I come up here. I'll even move the family up although all of them was born down-state.

Oh, yeah, about Stanislowski. Well, that guy wasn't crazy at all, at all. No, sir, not at all. That's the whole story. Why I was fired and everything. And he wasn't no Red. He wasn't crazy and he wasn't no Red. And that's why I got fired.

Sure, I know it sounds screwy, but here's how it happened. Like I said, I'd been working there a long time, fourteen years, and I was in line for the next foreman's job that opened up. All that time, of course, there'd been improvements made on the machines and some guys had to be let go, but they never let me go. I never liked Lithgoe, the super, or some of the assistant supers, but they didn't bother me much, so I never had no trouble with them.

This Stanislowski comes to the plant one day about a year ago. I don't know how he got a job because he was no kid. He must of been around fifty, although sometimes he acted younger and he was damn strong. He wasn't a very tall guy, but he was built like a fire-hydrant with big arms and a big, square face, kinda lined but good. His eyes were way deep in it and kinda bright and he had a thin mouth that didn't talk much. Sometimes it didn't look thin and that was usually outside the factory.

They put him on the machine next to mine and he could work it all right and repair it if something happened. At first I was worried about him getting the next foreman's job instead of me,

but after I got to know him I wasn't worried any more. I don't know why I wasn't except that he wasn't what you'd call an ambitious kind of a guy. He was easy-going and he never even got mad when the assistant supers kidded him about his name and his accent and said they didn't know who the hell had taken on a Russian Red with a name like his. Of course they knew he was a Polack but he didn't know they were kidding him. He didn't say anything at first but later he told them: 'I ain't no Russian. I'm a Pole. My grandfather killed Russians. Germans, too,' he says because one of the assistant supers is a guy named Krause. But they kept on kidding him, though maybe not as much. And I knew he was no Red because I'd seen him at nine o'clock Mass every Sunday, the children's Mass.

I got to know him better. His first name was Pete and he'd come to this country when he was a kid. Outside of that he didn't tell me much. He'd worked all over Ohio and in Pittsburgh and he'd been in steel down to Johnstown. He didn't have no family and he lived in a room in a house owned by some other Poles on the edge of town that kept chickens and had a little truck farm. Saturday afternoons he'd give them a hand around the farm, and Sundays and most evenings he'd read. Stuff he called encyclicalcs and books I never heard of by some guy named Block or Belock. He wanted me to read some of them, but I got no time for reading anything but the papers, what with the kids around the house and having to hit the hay early.

He was such a lonely sort of an old guy, although it didn't seem to bother him much, that I asked him out the house for Sunday dinner, but he wouldn't come till about the third time I ask him. He was pretty shy in front my wife and kids and he didn't eat much. He loosened up some later and talked about how bad the factory system and mass production was and we should all go back on the farm. He said how the kids might be a hindrance in the city but on the farm they'd be a big help. I asked him why

he didn't go in for farming himself if it was such a hot job, and he said he was waiting until he could own a farm outright. He didn't want no mortgages on it.

So I said that was okay but somebody had to work in the factories. He said, yes, so long as they kept working in them it was okay pretty much, but what was going to happen when only a few guys was doing the work of a lot? 'How many guys was working in the factory when you come there?' he says. 'About eighteen hundred,' I told him. 'And now there's about twelve hundred,' he says, 'and they're putting out more nails than ever. What about those other six hundred guys?' he says.

'Well, I never thought of that,' I told him. 'But what are you going to do about it?'

'Do we have to have new machinery?' he says. 'The old machinery made enough nails.'

'I don't know about that,' I says. 'You can't interfere with the march of progress.'

'What do you mean by progress?' he says. 'You don't call it progress when you make more nails and give less men jobs. What are they running the world for, anyways,' he says, 'nails or men?'

Well, we never got nowheres arguing, but I could still like the guy and my kids and my wife liked him but he wouldn't come to the house only once in a while. But I'd see him at the shop every day and we'd talk. But he kept to himself with the rest and after a while even the assistant supers stopped kidding him. He was one of the best men they had and he could punch out plenty of nails. There wasn't no danger of him getting fired even when they got those new machines in that they'd been talking about. That's what made the whole thing so screwy.

They'd been talking about those machines for a hell of a long time, so long that none of the newer guys was afraid of them any more, because they didn't think they'd ever come. Then, without no warning they're there one day when we get to work, standing

against the wall of the shop, blocking out some of the light, waiting to be set up, with the arm on them half as long again as the arm on the regular machines, the old ones.

I'll tell you there was damn poor production that day. I didn't have much reason to worry but the whole place felt so restless that I began to feel funny myself. At lunch hour everyone was in bunches talking about how many guys would get fired. I knew I wasn't going to get it but I began to figure that maybe there was something to what Stanislowski had been talking about. The way the guys looked as they talked was enough to give you the willies.

I look up Stanislowski during lunch hour and I say to him: 'I guess it's going to be tough on some of the boys.' 'Well, what did you expect?' he says. 'Every couple of years the same thing will happen.'

'It's tough, all right,' I told him, 'but you can't interfere with the march of progress. What are you going to do?'

'Stop the march of progress,' he says, 'or what they call the march of progress, until some way has been found to take care of the — the resulting unemployed,' I think he called it. Yeah, 'the resulting unemployed. Or until they been educated to going back to the land.'

'You don't have to worry, anyhow,' I said. 'You won't get fired. You ain't been here long but you know your stuff.'

'If I was discharged,' he says, 'it wouldn't be so bad as for some of the others with families. Why did this place have to be the first to buy those new machines?'

'What are you going to do?' I says, sarcastic-like. 'Bust them up?'

'More people would be kept working for a while,' he says, 'if something like that happened.' He was looking away from me when he said it and I hardly heard him; maybe that wasn't what he said, altogether, but it was like it. 'You don't like to see kids go hungry,' he says, 'because their father is out of a job?'

He turned to look at me when he said it and I began to feel restless again. I'd been losing the feeling during lunch hour some. I said: 'Hell, no, but what can you do?'

The whistle blew then and the machines started punching and you couldn't hear to talk. I didn't get to see him after work and I was pretty tired when I got home and slept good and it was a damn good thing I did, too.

The next morning I get there just on the dot of eight and I'm telling you when I look in on our floor I think I'm nuts. Those new machines was lying on the floor and most of them was all busted to hell. The extra long arms was busted in half a dozen pieces and the machines was good for nothing but junk. The company guards was there with rifles and they had the guys that worked the machines lined up against the walls and Lithgoe and the assistant supers were talking and moving around like they was nuts. You could smell gunpowder in the air and then I noticed right near the busted machines Pete Stanislowski was lying on his face, his head in a little puddle of blood and a small-headed, long-handled sledge-hammer lying under him.

I'm telling you, I never see the like of it. I thought I was screwy or having a bad dream. The other guys that worked the machines looked the same way I felt, kind of dizzy-looking and sick and the only ones that was making any fuss was Lithgoe and the assistant supers.

Right away I knew what had happened but before I could say anything one of the assistant supers says: 'There's Malone now,' and Lithgoe calls me over to him and says: 'Don't talk to no one. Go right to my office and wait there for me.'

He sends a guard down with me although I would of gone to the office without no guard and about ten minutes later he comes down himself with the two assistant supers who work on our floor. He closes the door after sending the guard out and he don't waste no time. 'Now, Malone,' he says, 'you knew Stanislowski better than anyone else, they tell me.'

'I didn't know him good, though,' I says. 'No one knew him good. I only had him out the house a couple of time to dinner, he was such a lonely kind of an old guy.'

'Oh, we're not trying to fasten anything on you,' the super says. 'All we want to establish is that he was a Red. He was, wasn't he?'

'Not that I know of,' I says. 'Leastways, he never mentioned it to me.'

'Didn't he give you pamphlets about communism?'

'No, sir,' I says. 'He give me stuff written by a Pope.'

'You wouldn't kid me, Malone?' Lithgoe says, sneering-like.

'No, sir,' I says. 'Here, look at it if you want.' And I pull a pamphlet out with Stanislowski's name written on the top in funny, foreign kind of letters. 'I ain't read much of it myself,' I said, 'but it don't say nothing about communism. You can't be a Catholic and a Communist at the same time.'

'Don't give me that crap,' Lithgoe says and he looks through the pamphlet, pretty quick. 'I'm wise to everything that goes on in this place,' he says, putting the pamphlet on the desk. 'We'll keep this. You can go now, but we ain't through with you yet.'

I was worried some but I didn't know what they were so bothered about. I figured it must be something else than the busted machines. One of the assistant supers tells me to take the afternoon off so I didn't know what they were all so worried about until I see the papers that afternoon. The local district attorney, a young mick out of Boston College, was wanting to know why Lithgoe had given the guards orders to fire at Stanislowski when they could of maybe just overpowered him, you know. The whole story was in the paper. Stanislowski had been the first man to work that morning and he must of carried the hammer in with him under his overcoat. Lithgoe hears the noise upstairs when Stanislowski goes to work on the machines with the hammer and he goes onto the floor with the guards and right away he tells the

guards to give it to Stanislawski. They shot him down without saying anything, it looked like, because he fell on his face and toward the machines and he never saw who shot him.

Anyhow, Lithgoe was on the edge of being in a jam and after he talks to me and has me sent home he goes around the next day to see Father Malik, who runs the Polish Church in town and check with him about Stanislawski. I don't know what Lithgoe said but anyhow he gets thrown out of the rectory. This Father Malik ain't no lightweight any way you look at him and it got in the papers how he took Lithgoe by the arm and onto the porch and half-tossed him down the steps.

The next morning Lithgoe calls me to the office and this time he's all smiles and offering me cigars and talking about how I'm in line for the next foreman's job that's open; and I don't know what's got into the guy until he says: 'Now, Malone, we're glad to find out you were right and telling the truth about Stanislawski not being a Red. Stanislawski's case is a very bad one,' he says. 'We have reason to believe the poor man was insane.'

'You don't say,' I says. 'That's news to me.'

'Oh, come, come, Malone,' he says, 'you knew him better than anyone else. How could anyone but a crazy man commit such a — a wanton act of sabotage' — that's what he called it — 'a wanton act of sabotage such as Stanislawski did, an act which will keep us on the old schedule of production for months to come and which interferes so — so wantonly with the march of progress. Now surely Stanislawski must have revealed other signs of his insanity and what we'd like you to do is to so testify before the grand jury next week if it is necessary to do so. He gave every evidence of insanity while destroying the new machines and the guards and myself feared for our own lives if we did not kill him. Now I'm sure you'll be willing to testify as to his insanity. He must have revealed it in some way. Think hard, Malone. Just what were the man's habits? They must have been revealing.'

'Well, let's see,' I said. 'He used to garden some out with those Polacks he lived with. And he used to read. Let's see. Well, once he said, what the hell was the world made for, nails or men? But I guess that's about all. I don't know whether those things are nuts if a factory hand does them or not.'

'Oh, come, come, Malone,' Lithgoe says. 'He must have manifested himself in other ways. The man was criminally insane.'

'May be,' I told him, 'but honest, the guy never did anything nuttier than what I just told you.'

'Well,' Lithgoe says, getting nasty, 'if that's the way you feel about it, you better get your time. We don't want anyone around here that thinks such ideas as his appeared to be are sane. Of course, if you change your mind by next week, let us know.'

I went out of there feeling kind of sick, I don't mind telling you. I'd never been out of a job in my life. And I tried and tried to think of something nutty Pete had said and I couldn't. The more I thought of it the more I figures that the guys that were really nuts was the guys like Lithgoe.

How did they finally whitewash the thing? Oh, they got some guys to swear that Pete had been a Red and had told them they should break the machines and kill the bosses and that he used to wander around the lockerroom talking to himself with his clothes on inside out. Imagine.

Me? No, I don't want to bust no machines. I just want a job. All I know, even if I don't do what he did, is that he wasn't nuts. There's a lotta screwy guys at Peerless but he wasn't one of them. That don't mean I'm gonna do what he did, though.

Sure. Sure. Thanks. I'll be up day after tomorrow to start then, and the family ought to get down in a couple of weeks. Sure. Thanks. Good-bye, now.

## THE THUNDERSTORM<sup>1</sup>

BY BENEDICT THIELEN

*S*ITTING there in the darkness they felt the stillness and peace of this first hot night of summer. There was a smell of warm earth and flowers in the insect-humming air and time flowed softly past, not measured by the hurried ticking of clocks but rather by the growth of roots or the ebb and flow of tides and the sense of many quiet summer nights of which this was only one.

'Now at last,' she was saying, 'I'm really beginning to feel thawed out. You know, God's-in-his-heaven . . . I never feel that way in winter.'

'No,' he said. 'But it's unusual, your liking the hot weather. I don't think most women do.'

'Has that been your experience with women?' she said, turning partly toward him and smiling.

'I haven't had any experience with women,' he said.

'No?'

'No, really.'

'A handsome, distinguished-looking man like you, gray at the temples.' She leaned forward, trying to see him in the darkness. 'You know, ever since I can remember I've dreamed of being

married to a man who was gray around the temples. And now I am.'

'Just an old man's darling. But I wasn't always gray around the temples.'

'I probably wouldn't have liked you as well then.'

'That's it. So that's why I say I haven't had any experience with women.'

'How about the one whose picture fell out of the pile of snapshots that time? You know, the nurse, during the war. What was her name again?'

'Oh, Phyllis....'

'Yes, Phyllis,' she said. 'Such a pretty name....'

'Don't make fun of Phyllis,' he said, laughing. 'Phyllis was a darn nice girl.'

'I'm sure she was.'

'Well, she was.'

'Well, that's what I'm saying. I don't blame men, anyway, for falling for nurses. I think those starched uniforms must be awfully attractive, aren't they?'

'Why, Margaret, I'm surprised!'

'Well, aren't they? I should think they would be.'

'Well, yes,' he said slowly. 'Yes, they are, really.'

She jumped suddenly up from her chair and got on his lap.

'Oh, you sound so solemn,' she said, laughing and kissing him and then drawing her head back to look into his face. "'Yes, they really are....'" Darling! Go on and tell me more about her. I like to hear about all your former flames. That's one thing I like about being married to you, Ned. You've had so much more experience than all the boys I know. Why, they all just seem like kids.'

'They're your age,' he said.

'I know, but I feel so much older. And then they are kids, compared to you.'

'My God,' he said, 'you make me feel ancient.'

'Don't be silly. Why, you...'

'Still, it's true. Let's see, you're twenty-four and I'm... yes, I'm sixteen years older than you. That's terrible.'

'Well, I never felt you were. But I feel that all those boys, like Peter and Howard and all those, I feel as if they were much younger even than I am. I'd hate to be married to someone who'd just gone from Yale or Princeton to Wall Street and stayed there for the rest of his life. But you did so many interesting things before you settled down. That's an awful word, isn't it, "settled down"; it always makes me think of a lump of wet dough. I'll bet men hate the sound of it; it means they're trapped, doesn't it? Do you feel as if you were trapped, Ned, being married to me?'

'You're the one who's trapped,' he said. 'Why, you're just a child. You don't know what it's all about.'

'You seem to forget that I Am A Mother.'

'Don't make me feel like a cad. Why, when I think...' He stopped, looking past her. 'Listen, what was that, thunder?'

They both looked toward the darkness. After a few seconds there was a flash of lightning, followed by a long distant rumble of thunder.

'That will cool things off,' he said.

'Yes, and that brings us back to the subject you've been trying to crawl out of. Namely, Phyllis. Tell me about her.'

'I told you all about her before — the time you saw her picture.'

'No, you didn't, Ned. You were just... just evasive. But I'm not jealous, really I'm not. I'm just interested. Were you awfully in love with her?'

He looked at her, smiling, and hummed, '"I don't want to get well, I don't want to get well, I'm in love with a beautiful nurse."'

'What's that?' she said.

'What's what?'

'What you're singing?'

'Why, a song we . . .' He stopped, looking at her. 'Do you mean to say you never knew . . . Well, I'll be damned! Of course you didn't. How could you?'

'Sing some more of it. It sounds wonderful.'

'How about a little selection from "Floradora," or shall I tell you about the big blizzard of '88? Or was it '86? My memory's beginning to fail me.'

'Never mind. Tell me about the big amour of . . . whenever it was. Tell me about Phyllis.'

'Well . . . Look, that was a big flash. I think it must be coming this way.'

'Yes, I think it is. But don't change the subject. What about Phyllis?'

'Well, Phyllis was very nice. She . . .'

'How old was she?'

'At the time? Oh, I don't know . . . about your age, I imagine.'

'My age now?'

'Yes, about that.'

'Why, then she must be quite — I mean . . .'

'That's right,' he said. 'She must be pretty well along by now.'

'Oh, that wasn't what I meant . . . I just meant . . .'

'It's so, though. Phyllis is at least forty by now . . . fair, fat, and forty.'

'Well, forty isn't old.'

'I choose to think that it isn't.'

'Of course not for a man, but I mean even for a woman, really.'

'Well, it's getting along,' he said. 'But it all depends . . . I mean your real age depends on what you've been through. Some people are children all their lives.'

'Had she, had Phyllis been through much?'

'Well, she'd been through two years of the war.'

'Oh!'

He drew back a little and looked at her, then laughed.

'Do you remember it well?' he asked her.

She shook her head.

'Why, you were practically a war baby,' he said. 'When I...'

There was a sudden brilliant flash of light that filled the whole sky and a loud flat clap of thunder.

He gave a start and she laughed and said, 'Goodness, were you frightened? I didn't know you minded the thunder.'

'I don't as a rule,' he said. 'But I guess that one took me by surprise.'

'It seems to be coming this way, doesn't it?' She glanced over her shoulder toward the door of the house. 'Perhaps I ought to close some of the windows in his room.'

'It won't be here for a while yet,' he said. 'He'll be all right.'

'Maybe he's frightened in there alone, do you think? I wouldn't want him to get a complex on thunderstorms.'

He laughed and said, 'Life is certainly complicated nowadays. People never used to know what a complex was, and now we worry about everything we do because we're afraid it might start a complex.'

'Still, it's true, though, isn't it? I mean people do get complexes.'

'Oh, yes, they do.'

'I wouldn't want him to be frightened.'

'We can hear him from here if he cries. If he doesn't cry it means he isn't afraid. Anyway, he's probably sleeping soundly. He probably doesn't even realize what's happening.'

'Isn't it wonderful? Such confidence in everything.... Oh, I sometimes feel so *sorry* for children. They're so trusting... my, that was a bright one!' She put her hand on his shoulder. 'Darling, you jumped again that time. Do you really mind it as much as that?'

'No, I don't mind it. I mean I usually don't even notice it. I don't know... I guess I must be nervous tonight.'

They were silent for a time, then she said, 'I don't know . . . it's hard to imagine . . . the war, I mean, just what it was like.'

She glanced at him. All along the dark horizon now the flashes of lightning flared up, spraying the sky with bursts of light, and there was a dull continuous rumble of thunder, with now and then a harder, closer, crackling crash.

'It's certainly taking its time about it,' he said. 'It doesn't seem to be coming any nearer.'

'Maybe it'll pass over. . . . You don't like to talk about it, do you?'

'About what?'

'The war. How it was . . .'

'Oh, well . . . anyway, it's all ancient history now. There's nothing more boring than that sort of thing. I remember how my grandfather used to go on, over and over, telling all about Antietam or whatever it was. He bored everybody to death. Of course it was all very real to him — the way he talked you'd have thought it had happened yesterday — but it wasn't to anybody else.'

'Well, I don't mean details . . . but that's all right. I know how you feel.'

He looked at her and smiled.

'Don't you think I do?' she said.

'Of course you do, my sweet. You know everything about me. You know too much about me. You know all my vile qualities.'

'You're perfect,' she said. 'I never knew such a man. No wonder they all fell for you.'

'Who fell for me?'

'Why, all of them. Phyllis and . . . Did Phyllis understand you as well as I do?'

'Of course not,' he said.

For a second the land outside, as they looked at it, was lighted by a green-white glare so that it looked suddenly strange and

unfamiliar, the smooth grass in front of the house looking chaotic and distorted, scattered over by the broken shadows of grass-blades and stones, as if seen from a great distance, the grass-blades seeming to be bare angular trees, the pebbles great rocks or tossed-up mounds of earth, an unreal dreamlike surface, like a dead and frozen earth, crater-pitted like the surface of the moon.

‘Did you ever see her again?’ she said. ‘Back here?’

‘No, I never saw her. I heard from her a few times. She was working in some hospital out in Jersey the last time I heard from her.’

‘And you never saw her! Why you could see her easily, if you wanted to.’

‘Yes, I suppose I could.’ He took her hand. ‘But now I have you, so I don’t need to.’

‘Am I really . . . really adequate?’

‘Quite adequate.’

‘But still,’ she said, ‘I should think you’d like to see her some time. I don’t want to come between you and your old friends.’

‘You’re all I need,’ he said. ‘I’ve got everything I want.’

‘You’re sure you don’t feel trapped?’

‘It’s nice to be trapped. Like this. When a man gets to be my age . . .’

‘Oh, you! If you keep on like this I’ll really begin to think you are old.’

The thunder rumbled again, but this time more distantly.

‘I really think the storm’s going over after all,’ he said.

‘It’s funny. I thought we’d get it surely.’ She got up and went over to the screen and leaned forward, trying to look through it. ‘It’s so dark you can’t see a thing. I suppose we might as well go to bed.’

She turned and went toward the door.

‘I’ll be along in a minute,’ he said. ‘I think I’ll smoke a cigarette first.’

She went into the house. He sat there listening to the receding sound of the thunder, the distant lessening rumble of it. The lightning was paler now in the distance and made only a faint glow over the land before the house when it flashed. After a short time he also went in.

‘How was he?’ he asked her as he came into the bedroom. ‘All right?’

‘You should have seen him,’ she said, laughing. ‘He was sitting bolt upright looking out the window. He hardly paid any attention to me when I came in.’

‘Not a bit afraid?’

‘He seemed to love it. When he saw me he just pointed at the lightning and made that funny noise he makes when he’s pleased with something.’

‘I’ll be darned... but you’d think the noise of the thunder would frighten him. It was pretty loud there a couple of times.’

‘It didn’t, though.’

‘He’s a remarkable child.’

‘Well, look at his parents.’

‘That’s true.’ He went over and looked down at her, watching her as she brushed her hair. ‘You know, you look about twelve years old, sitting there.’

‘It’s the light,’ she said. ‘What is it they call it on the stage? Something pink. Dubarry pink.’

‘It’s absurd to think of you as a mother.’

‘I’m sometimes sort of surprised myself. Especially when people look at you in this sort of greasy way they have when they see you with a brat. Everybody’s so sentimental about it. Mother’s Day, and Somebody’s Mother, and... Oh, that was a bright one. Maybe it’s coming this way after all.’

He shook his head and they both listened for the thunder, which did not come for a long time.

'No, it's too far off now,' he said, when the thunder finally came.

'I really think it's awfully good of him not to be a bit frightened, though, don't you?'

'I think it's splendid.'

'They're so *trusting*, Ned.' She looked suddenly tearful. 'Oh, dear, I feel so sorry for them. They're so terribly young.'

He leaned down and kissed her.

'He'll be all right,' he said. 'Don't you worry. He won't have any complexes.'

'No, but when I think of everything he's got to go through: measles, and chicken pox, and whooping cough, and first love, and...'

'Well, we got over all those things, didn't we? We...'

'Love too?' she said, glancing up at him.

'You said first love.' He looked at his watch. 'Come on, darling, it's late. Don't dawdle.'

Then later, in the darkness, he heard her quiet breathing and when the lightning flashed from time to time, far away, he could see her face on the pillow and the slow rise and fall of her breast. Even in the livid light her face looked young, smooth, and unshadowed.

Outside, the lightning flashes were no longer sudden or harsh enough to be disturbing and the thunder was only a subdued and distant rumbling, like the drums below the music of an orchestra. But it kept him from sleeping and his mind felt wide open, with a strange sense of time, of all the time that there had been and all that there was to be, and the many nights of restless heat and storm that had lain over the earth in the past and the many that were to come, and while she slept he listened for each new distant roll of thunder and heard it as it came across the dark land toward their house.

## HOW WILLIE PROUDFIT CAME HOME<sup>1</sup>

BY ROBERT PENN WARREN

HIGH up, on the bluff-side of the hill, a spring poured out of an archway of stone. In its basin there, the perfectly clear water eddied ceaselessly, braiding and swelling, swaying the young fronds of fern and the grass which trailed lushly down to the surface, spilling over the lip of stone and plunging down the slope to join the creek below. 'Soon's I laid eyes on hit,' Willie Proudfit would say, 'come-en slide-en down that rock that a-way, I says, thar my house will set. Sometimes a-nights I lays in bed and I kin hear hit. I lays in bed and I kin recollect the times out in the dry country I laid out a-nights and studied on water. In this country the Lord's done give a man water which ever way he turns, fer drinken and washen, hit looks lak, and a man don't know how hit is in the dry country, and the thirsten. But even here ain't ever man got him a spring come-en nigh outer the top of a hill, lak me, and fall-en so he kin lay and hear hit. Nor ever man got him a cold-air cave to keep his milk sweet to his mouth.'

He had built his house right at the creek bank, with the little branch from the falls running into the creek just behind it. And the cave, where the moisture dripped from the pelt-thick green

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by Louisiana State University.

moss, was at the foot of the bluff, just beside the house. Inside the cave, in the chill shadow, the crock jars of milk stood in rows. Willie Proudfit's wife would set her candle on a shelf of stone, for even at noon a candle was needed, and dip up the milk with a tin dipper and pour it into her big blue pitcher. Then, from another crock, she would take a pat of butter. Holding the heavy pitcher in one hand, but out from her body strongly and easily, she would move across the patch of grass toward the house. She would set the pitcher on the table, by her husband's plate, and smile. 'Willie, now he's the beatenest,' she would say, 'fer milk.'

'Now I thank you,' he might say, and pick up the pitcher; or he might only look up at her, not quite smiling, and say nothing, for he was not a man to talk much except on those rare occasions, in the evenings usually, when, lying stretched out like a cat on the boards of the little porch, he would reach back into his mind for some incident out of those years he had spent on the plains. He would tell it, not exactly for us, it seemed, but for the telling, speaking slowly and tentatively. Reaching back into those past times, he was like a man who, in a dark closet, runs his fingers over some once-familiar object and tries, uncertainly, to identify it. 'They's a passel of things,' he would say, 'on God's earth fer a man to study about, and ain't no man e'er seen 'em all. But I seen some. I seen gullies so deep and wide you could throw that-air hill in hit, lock, stock, and barr'l, and ne'er no difference to a man's sight. And the gully with colors spread out in the light, far as air eye could see, lak a flag. Colors lak the colors in the sky at sun, and layen thar on the ground, lak the sky had come a-fall-en down.' Then he might pause. His wife, Adelle, and her niece and nephew and I would be sitting in chairs propped back against the wall, with Willie Proudfit lying there on the floor, scarcely visible in the darkness. We would wait for him, not saying anything. If the season was right, the frogs would be piping down the creek, in the place where the ground gets marshy.

'The Indians taken them colors outer the earth,' he would say, 'and paint theirselves.' And he would pause again, and there would only be the night sounds. Then, he would say, 'When they dance.'

'Heathen,' the nephew, Sylvestus, said, in the darkness, for he was a pious man.

'Heathen,' Willie Proudfit said, in his soft, slow voice, 'heathen, in a way of speaken.' Then he fell silent, brooding backward into those times. Then he said: 'But them dance-en, hit ain't just frolic and jollification.' Then, later: 'They's a passel of things, and the Lord God, he made ever one. In his mighty plan, and ain't a sparrow falleth.'

But some evenings, he didn't speak a word.

He was a medium-sized man. His face was thinnish, and it had lines in it, tiny lines that meshed multitudinously in the leathery-looking skin, but it was neither an old nor a young face. The skin was brown like an oak leaf, so brown that against it the bluish-green eyes looked pale, and the very blond hair silvery like the hair of an old man. He wore his hair longer than any man I had ever seen, down to his neck behind and cut off square. Sometimes on Sunday mornings, just after breakfast, he would sit out on the chunk of limestone that formed the back step, and his wife would cut his hair. She had a pair of big clumsy-looking shears she used for that, and when the blades engaged on his thick hair, they made a sound like a heel on sand. He was a quiet and smooth-tempered man, even when times got bad and it looked like he was going to lose his place, and even when he knew he would lose it. He did lose it, and moved away. Before he lost it, he talked once or twice about going back west, like he had when he was a boy. One night, lying there on the porch boards, he suddenly said, quietly and off-hand, 'Oklahoma,' like the answer to a question somebody had asked him. But nobody had said anything for quite a while.

'Oklahoma,' the nephew said, and added, 'they say a man kin git a start out thar.'

'A long time since I seen hit,' Willie Proudfit said. He shifted a little, and the boards of the porch floor creaked in the dark. Then he said: 'Folks was goen in, then. To git a start. And fer one reason or 'nuther. Some just a move-en kind of folks, just move-en on. Lak I was, them days. The buffalo petered out, and they wasn't no more, whar I'd seen 'em black the ground off yander when a man looked. So I moved on, west. But I come back here. But a lot of folks, they ne'er come back, no-whar.'

He waited awhile, then he said: 'I come back, and left the dry country. But a man ne'er knows. Maybe I'll be goen back. To Oklahoma, maybe.'

'Sweat fer nuthen,' the nephew said, 'in this country.'

'Maybe I'll be goen agin,' Willie Proudfit said, 'and the time comes. If they's a place for a man to go nowadays. My pappy up and left here, and he ne'er aimed to, till the time come. Hit was in 'sixty-one and the war a-starten. My pappy wasn't easy in his mind. He never was no Bible-man exactly, but he studied on the shooten and the killen, and he prayed the Lord to show him which side to take. Which was the Lord's side. One mornen he said, "I ain't a-stayen in this country, on-easy in my mind and with my neighbors." He said, "I'm a leave-en."

'So he got shet of what he had, land and gear, what he couldn't git on a wagon. And he put two span oxen to the wagon, and we all hit out towards north Arkansas. Pappy had a cousin in north Arkansas who wrote him a letter sayen north Arkansas was air man's country, free fer the gitten, a fair land and floweren. We went down West Tennessee, whar hit was cotton, ever whar a man looked. And to Memphis. We got on a steamboat at Memphis and went down the Mississippi and up the Arkansas, the country flat lak a man's hand, and the ground black and greasy looken, an dead tree trunks standen in some fields, black with fire whar folks had been ringen and burnen to clear, and the cotton come-en on a-tween. But the good ground was all took. Been took a long

time. Then we come to Little Rock. We stayed in Little Rock nigh onto three weeks waiten fer pappy's cousin. And me, I got so I knowed my way all over the hull town, you know how a kid is, a-pryen and a-prowlen. We was campen down on a little crick, and pappy was a-fretten and a-fume-en to be gitten on, and the season wearen. He wanted to be gitten some ground broke, even if hit was late, and a house up fore winter. And the drinken water in Little Rock, hit wasn't so good and pappy one to be cantankerous about drinken water. They's water in that country, but hit ain't good water lak the water here. Lots of folks them days had the flux in Little Rock, they said, and hit was the drinken water. I ain't ne'er been back in Little Rock, not since I went on outer Arkansas west, but I seen a man not more'n five years back, come from Arkansas, and I says to him, how's the drinken water in Little Rock now? They git right good water now, he said. But not them days. And pappy was a-fume-en to git on.

'But me, I was ten-'leven year old, and ever day Sunday. I'd go up and see the men drillen and gitten ready, some of them drillen with sticks, not have-en no guns yit. One day I says, "Pappy, ain't you gonna be a sojer?" "Sojer, sojer," he said, "you stay away from them sojers, or I'll whale the tar." But I'd slip off and go watch them sojers, lak a kid will. I had ne'er seen sich.

'Then pappy's cousin come. "Amon," he said to my pappy, fer Amon was his name, "I been slow a-gitten here, but sumthen crost my path." He taken a piece of paper outer his pocket, and he had drawed a map on hit, with ever thing marked good. My pappy studied on the map, then he said, "Ain't you goen back?" "Naw, Amon, I ain't," pappy's cousin said, "I'm a sojer now."

"Sojer," my pappy said, and looked at him.

"Sojer," pappy's cousin said, "but I ain't a family man, lak you."

'Pappy shook his head, slow. "Naw," he said, "hit ain't that. I had me a good place in Kentucky. And my wife, she's a clever woman and fore-minded. I'll lay her agin air woman I e'er seen. She and my boys, they could run my place, and I could been a sojer. If I had hit in my mind and heart. But I ain't. I ain't clear and easy in my mind, this rise-en and slayen and a man not knownen."

'So pappy taken the map, and we loaded up the wagon, and put the oxen in, and crost over the river. That same, blessed day. Fer north Arkansas.

'Hit was air man's country, and the Lord's truth. Fair and flowen, lak pappy's cousin done said. Pappy found him a place in a fork of two cricks, bottom ground and high ground layen to a man's use-en, and a spring outer the ground, and timber standen, scalybark and white oak and cedar and yaller poplar and beech. And squirrels so thick they barked to wake you up of a mornen. "Lord God, Lord God," pappy said real soft, just standen there looken, after he'd done settled his mind on a spot to set his house. Then he said to ma, right sharp and sudden: "Henrietta, gimme that axe!" And ma done hit.

'Some of the folks round there went off and went to the war, like pappy's cousin, but pappy never the hull duration. Folks would be a-talken, and a man mought name the war, and pappy, he'd just git up and walk off. Then word come the war was over. I was a big feller then, goen on sixteen, and handy if I do say so. Us boys worked with pappy round the place, and we done right well. Hit was a good country, fer fair. Ever fall we'd go down to Little Rock and do our big trade-en. Down at Mr. Wolff's wagon yard. When the time come on, pappy would cast round, and load up what hides layen round, and what tallow they was we didn't need, and sich truck, and honey — Lord God, the honey, you'd go out and knock over a bee tree, and honey to spare — and we'd start down to Little Rock. They wasn't nuthen Mr. Wolff wouldn't

buy off'n a man, and give him cash money or swap outer his wholesale store. We done swapp'en fer the majority, fer you taken cash money and give it right back to Mr. Wolff fer what you was gitten. So pappy'd swap, and load up the wagon with plunder, and we'd start on back home.

'Time come I was goen on nineteen, and I said to pappy, "Pappy, I been studyen about goen up to Kansas."

'And pappy said, "Boy, I been notice-en you sorter raise-en yore sap."

'So I taken out fer Kansas. Pappy gimme a horse and saddle and fifty dollars and hit gold. I figgered I'd go to Kansas and be a buffalo hunter, lak I'd heared tell. I figgered I was handy with a rifle as the next man. Many's the time, shooten fer a steer, I'd took hind quarter, hide, and tallow, that being top man. Fellers would put up fifty cents a-piece and buy a steer and shoot fer choice, high man hind quarter, hide, and tallow, next man, hind quarter, and next man, fore quarter and head, and next man, fore quarter. Shoot at a shingle and a little heart drawed on hit in white clay, forty paces free style or sixty paces layen to a chunk.

'Hit was in Hays City I taken up with a feller named Mingo Smith. He was a Yankee and he fit the war. He got mustered out and he come to Kansas. He'd been a muleskinner down to Sante Fe, and a bull-whacker out Colorado way, and a boss layen the Kansas Pacific railroad, and he'd hunted buffalo fer the railroad, too, to feed the men, they wasn't nuthen he hadn't took a turn to, hit looked lak. He was a long skinny feller, didn't have no meat on his bones to speak of, and his face was all yaller and he didn't have no hair to his head, and hit yaller, too. And him not more'n thirty. "Some day, I'll shore be a disappointmint to a Cheyenne," he'd say, and rub his hand over whar his hair oughter be. He figgered he'd take one more turn, the price on hides goen up lak hit was. Men come-en out to Hays City to buy hides, and all. Mingo, he had some money he'd got fer freighten up from

Fort Sill, and a old wagon, and he bought and paid fer what all we needed, and said I could pay him my part outer what we took. So I thanked him kindly, and we hit out, him and me.

‘Seven-eight year, and durn, we was all over that-air country, one time and ernuther. North of Hays City to the Saline, and up Pawnee Crick and the Arkansas, and down in the Panhandle on the Canadian, and down to Fort Sill. They had been a time a man couldn’t git nuthen fer a hide not seasonable, with the fur good, and summer hunten didn’t pay a man powder and git. But we come in to Hays City our first trip, loaded down, and figgeren on what to do till the cold come, and a feller what bought hides for Durfee, over to Leavenworth — give us two dollars and a dime fer prime bull, I recollect — he says, “Boys, just belly up quick, and quench yore thirst, and hit out agin, I’m buyen now, summer or winter, rain or shine!” “Is that a fact,” Mingo says, “summer hide?” “Hit’s a fact,” that feller says.

‘Mingo up and buys ernuther wagon, and hires two feller to skin — Irish, they was, the country was plumb full of Irish — and a feller to cook and stretch, and I says to him, “Lord God, Mingo, you act lak we was rich.” And he says, “We ain’t, but Lord God, we gonna be. And I’m durn tired of skinnen, durned if I ain’t. I don’t mind shooten, but I hate to skin. One thing hit was, shooten rebels, a man ne’er had to skin ’em. Hit’s gonna be shooten now, like a gentleman, till the barr’l hots.”

‘And durn if he didn’t say the God’s truth. The barr’l hot to a man’s hand. The day a still day, and the smoke round a man’s head like a fog, and yore ears ringen. If’n you got a stand — the buffalo standen and graze-en — and drapped the lead one, the others mought just sniff and bawl, and not stampede. If you was lucky. Nuthen to hit then, keep on shooten fer the outside ones that looked lak they mought git restless, take hit easy and not git yore gun barr’l too hot. That next year, I mind me we got two good stand, Mingo one and me one. I was come-en up a little

rise south of a crick runnen in the Pawnee, and I raised up my head, keerful, and thar they was, a passel of 'em. 'Bout a hundred and fifty paces off yander, and me down wind. I propped my Sharp's to my prongstick, and cracked down. I started to git up — a man would git up and run to git him his next shot — and got on one knee, and I see they wasn't no buffalo down. I figgered I'd missed, and a easy shot, and I laid back down fer a try. Then I seen a buffalo just lay down, and the rest standen thar, not move-en. I shot agin, and a buffalo come down, and the rest a-standen. And agin. I said, "Lord God," I said, "I do believe hit's a stand!"

'A stand hit was. I laid thar, looken down the barr'l of my Sharp's and the buffalo standen. I laid thar, counten out loud betwixt shots not to go too fast and hot the gun. A long time, and I could see 'em come down, slow, to the knees, when the ball found. Then keel over and lay. And the rest standen round, sniffen and bawlen. A man lays thar, the sun a-bearen down, and keeps on a-pullen on the trigger. He ain't lak his-self. Naw, he ain't. Lak he wasn't no man, nor nuthen. Lak hit ain't him has a-holt of the gun, but the gun had a-holt of him. Lak he mought git up and walk off and leave them buffalo down the rise, a-standen, and leave the gun lay, and the gun would be shooten and a-shooten, by hitself, and ne'er no end. And the buffalo, down the rise, standen and bawlen. Hit comes to a man that a-way.

'Seventy-two buffalo I shot that afternoon, layen thar, a-fore they broke and run. Gitten on to sun, they broke. I laid thar, and seen 'em go, what was left, not nigh a score, and the dust a-rise-en behind 'em. They run north. I seen 'em past sight, but I kept on a-layen thar, lak I couldn't uncrook my hand-holt off'n my Sharp's, and the barr'l hot to a man's flesh. I laid thar, lak a man past his short rows.

"Durn," Mingo said, "them buffalo down thar, and you

a-layen here lak hit wasn't nuthen!" I ne'er heared him come-en. "Boy, go git them Irish," he said, "hit's gonna be night work, a-skinnen." I didn't say nuthen, I taken out fer the wagons to git them skinners when they done got done with the ones they was skinnen. We got back hit was night, and Mingo down thar, skinnen and cussen. But the moon come up, red and swole layen thar to the east, bigger'n a barn. Ain't no moons in this country lak them moons in west Kansas. We skinned by the moon. Didn't nobody say nuthen. Nary a sound but a man grunten, or a knife whetten on a stell, maybe, soft and whickeren lak when hit's a good temper to the blade, and the sound hit makes when the hide gives off'n the meat to a good long pull. Then, off a-ways, the coyotes singen, and come-en closter.

"We skinned 'em all, all seventy-two, and taken the tongues. And the mops off'n the bulls. We loaded the wagon, and started up the rise, not have-en et, and plumb tuckered. Nigh half way up the rise, I recollect, I looked back. The moon was ride-en high, and the ground down thar looked white lak water, I recollect, and them carcasses sticken up lak black rocks outer water.

"But a man didn't make him a stand ever day. Not by a sight, I kin tell you. He'd try the wind and git down wind, and start move-en in, slow and keerful, crawlen a good piece maybe. They started move-en, and hit was time. Two hundred paces and you was lucky. But a Sharp's will shoot lak a cannon. Hit's a fact. Three quarter mile ain't nuthen fer a Sharp's, not even on a bull buffalo, if'n you kin hit him. Which you cain't. But two-fifty, three hundred paces, a man kin. And under the hump. You shoot, and the herd breaks and runs, and stops, and you run to ketch up, and lay and shoot. And they run agin. That a-way, till they done left you. Or you kin ride with 'em, shooten alongside with a carbeen. A Spencer, I had me. But we ne'er done that but to be a-doen. Hit was a sporten man's way, you might say. And the way with the Indians. Only they used a bow and arrow,

ride-en alongside, and one arrow doen hit sometimes. Or two.

'But one way and ernuther, by and large we taken our share, Mingo and me. Winter and summer. And not us only. In Charlie Rath's sheds in Dodge City, many's the time with my own eyes I seen fifty-sixty thousand hides baled up and waiten, and his loaden yard so thick with wagons a man could nigh cross hit and ne'er set foot to ground. Wagons standen nigh hub to hub, and loaded, and fellers just in and likkered up and rare-en and cussen, waiten to git shet of their take. A time hit was, with money free lak sweat on a nigger, and men outer the war and from fer countries, and the likker runnen lak water. A power of meanness, and no denyen. But a man could git a-long, and not have him no trouble to speak on. If'n he tended to his business, and was God-fearen, and ne'er taken no back-sass off'n no man.

'We got our'n and didn't reckon on no end, hit looked lak. But a man's that a-way. He sees sumthen, and don't reckon on no end, no way, and don't see hit a-come-en. They's a hoggishness in man, and a hog-blindness. Down off'n Medicine Lodge Crick, one time, I was a-standen on a little rise, in the spring, and the buffalo was a-move-en. North, lak they done. All the buffalo trails run north-south, and hit was spring. They was move-en north, and fer as a man could see, hit was buffalo. They was that thick. No pore human man could name their number, only the Lord on high. That a-way, and no man to say the end. But I seen 'em lay, skinned and stinken, black-en the ground fer what a man could ride half a day. A man couldn't breathe fresh fer the stinken. And before you knowed hit, they wasn't no buffalo in Kansas. You could go a hull day and see nary a one. "Hit's me fer Oklahoma," Mingo said, "whar thar's buffalo yit. Down Cimarron way, or Beaver Crick."

"Hit's Indian country," I said, "I ain't a-relishen no Indians."

"They's fellers been down thar and done right good," Mingo

said. "I heared tell of a feller come out with nigh onto a thousand hides, and not down thar no time."

"And fellers been down thar and ain't come back," I said.

"Indians," Mingo said, "I fit Indians down in Oklahoma, when I was freighten. Hit ain't nuthen to brag on. They ain't got nuthen lak this-here." And he give his Sharp's a little h'ist. "The guns they got, ain't no white man would have 'em."

"I ain't skeered," I said, "but hit ain't the law. Hit's Indian country down thar, by law."

"Indian country," and Mingo give a spit; "hit ain't Indian country fer long. A feller from Dodge City said they's a gang gitten ready to go down fer buffalo, all together. Said Myers was gonna go down and buy hides and set up to do business right thar, down in Oklahoma, or maybe Texas toward the Canadian. Hit's big doens."

"You figgeren on goen down with 'em?" I ast him.

"Naw," Mingo said, "folks gits under my feet."

"We went down to Oklahoma, just us and our skinners. New skinners, they was, our old skinners quitten, nor wanten to go to Indian country. We got two new ones, a French feller and a nigger. We had to give 'em eighty dollars a month and found, because hit was Indian country. We went down thar. 'Seventy-four, hit was, and a drout year with the cricks dryen. And they was grasshoppers come that year, I recollect. But we made out, and they was buffalo thar. Hit was lak a-fore, the buffalo move-en and fillen the land. Hit was lak new country. Fer a spell. And we worked fast and fer. But a man had to keep his eyes skinned, looken fer Indians. And somebody watchen all night, turn a-bout. We ne'er seen none till we got our first take out, up to Dodge City, and come back. Then we seen some, one time. The nigger was down a little draw, skinnen some buffalo Mingo shot, and French was at the wagon, stretchen hides, and Mingo and me was move-en out in the open. They come over a rise, between the draw and the

wagons, and we seen 'em. We high-tailed fer home, and beat'em to the wagons, and started shooten. "Whar's the nigger?" Mingo said.

"He ain't here," French said.

"God dammit," Mingo said, layen thar shooten, "that black bastud lets 'em slip up and git him, and me with a dislak fer skinnen lak I got. Hit's the thanks a man gits fer fighten rebels four years to set a nigger free."

"We laid thar a-shooten at 'em all afternoon. French loaden, and Mingo and me shooten. When they was a-way off, we used our Sharp's, and when they come ride-en in clost, we used our carbeen and Colt guns. A Spencer carbeen shoots twelve times without stoppen, and heavy lead. Hit was that a-way all afternoon, and hit was a clear night and they couldn't git in clost and us not see. They tried hit, but we seen 'em ever time. They left a-fore day.

"Hit come day, and they was gone. They was some ponies layen off here and yander, and clost in, not more'n fifteen paces, a Indian. I ne'er knowed one got that nigh, but night time'll fool you. If'n we got airy other, they carried him off. But this one was too clost. We walked out to whar he was a-layen. "Tryen to make a *coup*," Mingo said, "come-en in clost, that a-way. Wanted to git to be a chief." He was a young Indian, and he was shot in the guts. "The durn fool," Mingo said. He poked him with his foot. "Kiowa," he said. Then he squatted down and taken out his knife.

"What you aim to do?" I ast him.

"Git me a scalp," Mingo said.

"Hit ain't Christian," I said.

"Hell," he said, "I knowed Christians as skinned Indians. I knowed a feller made him a baccy sack outer squaw-hide. But hit didn't do so good," he said, and started cutten, "hit wore out right off. But a scalp now, hit's diff'rent, hit's a keepsake."

'He scalped him, then we looked down the draw fer the nigger. Thar he was, but they'd done taken his scalp. "They made a pore trade," Mingo said; "a nigger's scalp ain't no good, hit ain't worth beans. Hit ain't much better'n mine."

'Them was the only Indians we had trouble with that year, but them fellers went down from Dodge City all together, they had plenty trouble over in Texas. They had a big fight down at a place called 'Dobe Walls, and some got killed, and a passel of Indians. But the Indians was still bad on south a-ways. They was fighten at Anadarko with the sojers, and killen and scalpen here and yander. And raiden down to Texas. And the Kiowas caught a supply train — hit was Captain Lyman's wagons, I recollect — and give 'em a big tussle. We was down to Fort Sill the next spring, and we heared tell from the sojers. How they laid out four days in holes they dug, a-thirsten and no water, and the Indians all round, a-ride-en and a-whoopen and a-shooten. They was one Indian tied a white sheet round him and come ride-en through the sojers four times, and back agin, and lead cut that-air sheet off'n him, but ne'er a slug teched him. Doen hit made him a big chief, and they give him a new name fer hit, lak they done. But hit's done left me now, and I cain't name hit to you. All them days them sojers laid thar, thirsten. Then the rain come, heavy lak when the drout breaks in that-air country, and hit durn nigh drowned 'em layen thar in them holes they dug. But a scout got through to Camp Supply, and more sojers come.

'Hit was a bad year, and no denyen, and the Gin'al over to Fort Sill — hit was Gin'al Sheridan as fit in the war — a-gitten ready and sot to stomp 'em out. And he done hit. They was run here and yander, lak a coyote and the dogs on him. They run 'em and ne'er give no breathen. Some of 'em come in and give up, but some of 'em kept on a-runnen and a-fighten, the wildest what went with the war chiefs Lone Wolf and Maman-ti and sich. But they come in, too, a-fore hit was done. I seen 'em. Hit was at

Fort Sill I seen 'em. They was another chief, named Kicken Bird, what got 'em in. He seen how hit would be, and he said hit to his people, and he made 'em come in. I seen 'em at Fort Sill. They put them Indians in the corrals — they was stone corrals — and the bad chiefs locked up in the jail, and chained, and in the stone ice house they was a-builden. Ever day the wagons with meat come, and they throwed the meat over the wall — raw meat and in chunks lak you was feeden a passel of painters. They taken what stock the Indians had and drove 'em outside and shot 'em and let 'em lay, stinken. Hit was lak the stink when they'd been shooten buffalo and skinned 'em. Git a west wind, and couldn't no man in Fort Sill git the stink of them ponies outer his nose, wake-en nor sleepen. And hit ne'er helped no man eat his vittles.

'They was gonna send the bad chiefs off and git shet of 'em. A fer piece, to Florida. Kicken Bird, they was gonna let him pick out the ones to go, the ones he knowed was dead-set agin the white folks. And he done hit. He named Lone Wolf and Maman-ti, and a passel more, and said they would ne'er have hit in their hearts not to scalp a white man. The time come to git shet of 'em, and I seen hit. Them army wagons was standen thar by the ice house, and sojers drawed up with guns, and they taken out the Indians from the ice house. They had chains on 'em. And thar Kicken Bird come ride-en on his big gray stallion — a man he was to look on, tall and limber, and he could evermore set a hoss, a sight to see. He got off, and come up close to Maman-ti and Lone Wolf and them was standen thar. "Hit's time," he said, "and my heart is full of a big sadness. But it will be. I love you, but you would not take the right road. But I love my people. I send you away because I love my people, and you would make them kill theirselves a-beaten their head agin the stone. Fighten the white man is lak beaten yore head on a stone. When yore hearts is changed, you kin come back to yore people,

and you will find love in my heart for you." That's what they said he said, fer I didn't know no Kiowa talk to speak of.

'The chiefs standen thar, the chains a-hangen off'n 'em, didn't say nuthen. They just looked at Kicken Bird. Then Maman-ti, he said: "You think you are a big chief, Kicken Bird. You think you have done a good thing. The white men talk to you and puff you up, Kicken Bird. But you are lak a buffalo cow, dead and layen in the sun and swole with rot-wind. Indians ought to be a-dyen together, but you would not die with us, Kicken Bird. Now you will die by yoreself, Kicken Bird. You are dyen now, Kicken Bird, and the rot-wind is in you." The wagons started rollen, the black-snakes a-cracken, off toward Caddo crossen. Kicken Bird stood thar, and watched 'em go. The sojers marched off, but Kicken Bird kept on a-standen thar, looken whar the wagons done gone.

'They's things in the world fer a man to study on, and hit's one of 'em. What come to Kicken Bird. He stood thar, a-looken, and then he went to his lodge, down on Cache Crick, nigh Sill. They say he just set thar, not give-en nuthen to notice, to speak of. He et a little sumthen, but he didn't relish nuthen. He ne'er taken his eyes off'n the ground. Five days that a-way, and come the fifth mornen and he keeled over and died. "I done what come to me," he said, layen thar, "and I taken the white man's hand." Then he was dead. Nary a mark on him, and him in the prime.

'But they ain't no tellen. Some said as how Maman-ti, when the wagons camped outer Sill, prayed and put a strong medicine on Kicken Bird to die. Then he died his-self fer putten medicine on ernuther Kiowa. But agin, maybe his heart was broke in two. Maybe Kicken Bird's heart broke in two lak a flint rock when you put hit in the hot fire. They ain't no tellen. But hit's sumthen fer a man to study on.

'Hit was in May they taken them Indians away from Sill, and

me and Mingo hit out agin. Buffalo hunten agin. But we didn't do so good that year. They was peteren out. That's what made them Indians so durn bad, some folks said, them buffalo goen. They didn't git no vittles then, but what the gov'mint give 'em, and hit spiled more'n lak. We taken what we could find, but the time was goen in Oklahoma. We heared tell they was buffalo down Brazos, and Charlie Hart's boys a-gitten 'em, so hit was down Brazos and up Pease River. We done what we could, but the time was a-goen. Mingo got lak I'd ne'er seen him git a-fore. We'd sight buffalo, and he'd go nigh loco. "Durn, God durn," he'd say, his voice lak a man prayen "God durn the bastuds." And his eyes with a shine in 'em lak a man got the fever. "Durn," he'd say, "what you a-waiten fer, you Kentuck bastud?" and we'd move out on 'em. Light or dark, he'd be at hit. Past sun, I seen him, and not light fer a man to aim by. Him a-waste-en lead, and them Sharp's evermore et lead lak a hog slop. Two ounce the slug, and powder to back hit. "Mingo," I says to him, "hit's a willful waste." "I'll cut yore scaggly thote," he said, and ne'er said one more word all night.

"We come outer Brazos and up Kansas way. "They's buffalo north," Mingo'd say. Days, and we'd see a old bull, maybe, and a couple of cows. And bones layen white on the ground, fer as a man's sight, white lak a salt flat. The wagon wheel went over 'em, cracken. We come to Dodge City. They was bones piled and ricked up thar, a sight of bones. Them nesters and 'steaders done picked up and brung 'em in to sell 'em. They was buyen 'em back east to make fert'lizer to put on the wore-out ground. Bones ricked up thar along the Santa Fe, a-waiten, you ne'er seen sich. They was fellers in Dodge City, but not lak a-fore. Fellers was setten round didn't have a dime, what had been throwen round the green lak a senator. Bones and broke buffalo hunters thar, them days. We was in Dodge City, and Mingo ne'er outer spitten-range of a bottle. "Buffalo gone," he said, "durn, and

hit'll be whisky next, and no country fer a white man." But they shore-God wasn't no drout in sight yit. Not with Mingo.

"We was in Dodge City, and word come the Santa Fe was payen out good money fer men to fight the Denver and Rio Grande fer putten the track through where the Arkansas comes outer the mountains, out in Colorado. Mingo come and said to git ready, we was goen. But I said, naw, I wasn't gonna be a-shooten and killen no human man, not fer no railroad, no way. "Me," Mingo said, "I kilt plenty fer the gov'mint goen on four years, and kill a man fer the gov'mint, I shore-God oughter be willen to kill me one fer anybody else. Even a railroad." But naw, I said. But Mingo went on and done hit, and me waiten in Dodge City. Then he come on back, and money he had. "Hit'll be Santa Fe line," he said, "and Irish fer cross-ties."

"Then Mingo said: "Yellowstone, up Yellowstone and they's buffalo lak a-fore. Hit's the word. Git ready." But I ne'er said nuthen. "What you setten thar fer?" he said. "Git ready." Then I said I wasn't aimen to go. "What you aimen to do?" Mingo said. I said I couldn't rightly name hit, but hit would come to me. I said I might take me out some ground, have-en a little money left to git me gear and a start. Mingo looked at me lak he ne'er laid eyes on me a-fore, and he give a spit on the ground. "A fool hoe-man," he said; "you be a durn fool hoe-man." "Maybe," I said, "if'n hit comes to me." "A bone-picker," he said. He give me a look, and that's the last word I e'er heared him say. "Bone-picker," he said, and give me a look, and walked off. He was gone, a-fore sun next mornen. Yellowstone way, they said.

"I taken me a claim, lak I said. Up in Kansas. And I done well as the next one, I reckin. I ne'er minded putten my back to hit, and layen a-holt. And I had me money to git a start, gear and stock and sich. Two year, goen on three, I stayed. I was a-make-en out, that wasn't hit. Hit was sumthen come over me.

I couldn't name hit. But thar hit was, sleepen and wake-en. I sold my stock and gear. I said to a man, "What'll you gimme fer my stock and gear?" And he named hit. Hit wasn't nuthen, not to what a man could a-got. But I taken hit, and hit was ample. To git me a outfit. And I started a-move-en. Down through Oklahoma, and west. West, lak a man done them days when hit come over him to be a-move-en.

'I went down the way I'd been a-fore, and hit was diff'rent a-ready. But not diff'rent lak when I come back in 'ninety-one on my way back here. The Indians was dance-en then, when I come back through, tryen to dance the buffalo back. They'd been gone a long time then, and the bones. Them Indians was a-tryen to dance 'em back. And Indians ever whar, I heared tell, up in Dakota and west. The ghost-dance, they named hit. They was make-en medicine and tryen to dance back the good times, and them long gone. Hit would be a new world, and fer Indians, they claimed. A new earth was a-come-en, all white and clean past a man's thinken, and the buffalo on hit a-move-en and no end. Lak that time I stood on a rise near Medicine Lodge Crick and seen 'em a-move-en, and ne'er reckined on the end, how hit would be. That-air new earth was a-come-en, they figgered, a-slide-en over the old earth whar the buffalo was done gone now and the Indians was dirt, a-blotted hit out clean, lak a kid spits on his slate and rubs hit clean. And thar all the Indians would be, all the nations a-standen and callen, all them what had died, on that-air new white earth. The live ones was dance-en to bring hit.

'They was them as had seen hit. They was them as fell down in the dance and had died, lak they named hit, when they was a-dance-en, and laid on the ground stark and stiff lak dead. They was the ones as had seen hit, the new land. They'd come to, lak a man wake-en, and tell as how they had seen hit. They seen the new earth, all white and shine-en, and the dead ones thar, happy, and beckonen with the hand, and they talked to 'em.

Squaws what had chil'en what was dead, they'd see 'em. And they'd git busy a-make-en moccasins and toys, lak hummers and bull-roarers and sich, and bring 'em to the dance next time to have 'em ready to give to the chil'en when they seen 'em. They'd see 'em, and give 'em the toys and sich. Then they'd come round, layen thar, and thar'd be that-air truck they'd done fixed fer the chil'en. Layen thar on the ground. They didn't know what to make on hit. See-en hit thar.

'They was some folks as was laughen and scornen. Said them Indians was gone plumb crazy. But not me. One time, long a-fore, when I was young and sallet-green, I mighter scorned. But not then, in 'ninety-one, when I was a-come-en back, after what hit was I'd seen. I'd laid dead lak them Indians, and seen hit come to me. Hit was how I was a-come-en back. In ninety-one.

'But them Indians. They come together in a big ring, a dance-en. Round and round, and a-singen. Them songs they made up, how they'd been dead and what they seen in that-air new land a-come-en. And the medicine man, he was in the middle, a-shake-en his eagle feather, and them Indians move-en round, and a-singen. Then somebody starts to feel hit a-come-en, and starts a-shake-en and shudder'en, lak the chill. And the medicine man, he waves that-air eagle feather a-fore his face what's a-shake-en, and he blows out his breath at him and says, "Hunh, hunh, hunh, hunh!" And that feller comes outer the ring in the middle, lak the blind-staggers, and the medicine man waves the feather a-fore him, and ne'er stops and says, "Hunh, hunh, hunh!" Till that-air feller gits the jerks, lak a man when the gospel hits him. Then the jerks is gone, and him a-standen, stiffer'n a man on the coolen board, and eyes a-stare-en lak a-fore the pennies is put. He stand thar, how long hit ain't no tellen, and them dance-en and singen, and hit come-en on more Indians, too, and them a-fall-en. They lays on the ground thar, lak dead,

and broad daylight, maybe. And the singen and dance-en not stoppen.

'But that was in 'ninety-one, when I was come-en back, not when I was a-goen. A-goen, I was headed west, lak I said, lak a man them days when hit come on him to be move-en. I was down in Santa Fe and seen hit. I went to the middle of town, and seen the folks a-move-en and doen, and I figgered I'd lay over and rest up, maybe. Then hit come on me. Naw, I said, I ain't a-stoppen, hit's on me not to be a-stoppen. I didn't tarry none, only to git me grub and sich. A feller said to me, "Whar you goen?" I said I didn't know, and he said, "God-a-mighty, stranger, goen and don't know whar!" And I said, "Naw, I don't know, but hit'll come to me when I git thar." And he said, "God-a-mighty!" And I went on.

'I come into the mountains. Them mountains wasn't lak no mountains you e'er seen. Nor me. Not lak them hills in Arkansas or in this-here country in Kentucky. That-air country was open and high, and the mountains rise-en outer hit. Hit was June when I come in the high country, and they was flowers ever whar. I ne'er seen sich. Greasewood with blooms plumb gold, and little flowers on the ground. And the cactus, flowers a-bloomen fer as a man's sight. But no smell. Put yore nose to hit, but they ain't no smell, fer all the brightness.

'I went on to the high mountains. Cedar and juniper I come to, but scrub and not fitten fer nuthen. Then up higher, piñons, then oak but hit scrub. Then high up in them mountains, the big pines standen, and no man e'er laid axe. Look down and the land was all tore up down below, ever which way, tore up and a-layen on end. And the ground with colors lak the sky at sun. Look up, and snow was still layen when I come, and the sun white on hit, lak on cloud-tops in summer. The wind come down off'n the snow, cold to yore face and the sun shine-en.

'I come in that-air country, and ne'er ast no man the way.

Outer Santa Fe I seen folks a-goen and come-en, then they wasn't none to speak on. In the high country I seen Indians some times, ride-en along, or standen, and I made 'em signs and them me, but I ne'er ast 'em the way. A man could be in a place in that-air country and they'd be Indians live-en thar, not a pistol-shot, and him ne'er knownen. Not the way they fixed them houses, dirt piled up round looken lak a hump outer the ground. Hogans, they named them houses. The cold come or hit git dry and the grass give out, and they'd up and move and build 'em a new house. One day, sun to sun, and hit was built.

'Summer I was in the mountains, high up. The cold come, and I moved down and built me a house, lak them Indian houses, only mine set south, backed up under a hunk of rock. Them Indian houses sets east, ne'er no other way. Hit's agin their religion. And I fixed me a shed fer my ponies. That winter I laid up thar. I lived off'n the land. A man kin do hit, put to hit, what with a rifle and snare-en. But I traded the Indians fer some corn, now and agin. But two-three months, and I ne'er seen nobody, hair nor hide. I didn't miss hit, somehow. I'd a-come thar, and thar I was. Hit's past name-en, how the Lord God leads a man some time, and sets his foot. Thar I was, and I knowed they was a world of folks off yander, down in the flat country. A-gitten and a-begetten, and not knownen the morrow. I knowed how they'd been war and killen in the country, and folks rise-en in slaughter, brother agin brother. And men was dead and under the earth, as had walked on hit, standen up lak me or airy breathen man. And no man to name the reason. Only the Lord God. I minded me on the power of meanness I'd seen in my time. And done, to speak truth. A man does hit, some more, some less, but he's got hit to think on.

'Hit looked lak my head was full, one thing and ernuther. Sometimes hit was lak I could see, plain as day, ever-thing and ever-body I'd e'er knowed layen out a-fore me, all at one time.

They ain't no tellen how hit was, but hit was that a-way. All together, lak a man lived his life, and the time not a-passen while he lived hit. Hit's past sayen, and they ain't no word fer me to say hit, but hit was that a-way. A-fore God. Hit's sumthen to study on. Then a man feels clean, hit's ne'er the same.

'Summer come, and the snow gone, and I started up to the high mountains. I seen Indians a-move-en, too. They made me signs, and I taken up with 'em. They had 'em sheep and ponies, and was goen whar the grass was good. They was two or three of 'em knowed our talk, not good but some. All summer I was with them Indians, off and on. The grass gone and time to be a-move-en, and they ast me to move too, and I done hit. A man could git along with them Indians if'n he had a mind to. I done hit. They ne'er had nuthin agin me, nor me agin them. Hit come cold, and they was a-move-en down low, and I went with 'em. They helped build me a winter hogan, lak their'n, and they rubbed corn meal on the posts, the way they done fer luck, and sprinkled hit on the floor, and said the words they says to make the live-en in the house be good live-en. They throwed a handful on the fire they'd built under the smoke hole, and said the words. They fixed vittles, and we set on the floor, on sheep skins, and taken sop, side by side. They made cigarettes, lak they do, outer corn shucks and terbaccer, and set thar smoke-en and talken. Hit was lak a log-raise-en in this-here country, and folks jollifyen.

'Five year, and hit was that a-way. Hit was a way of live-en, if'n hit's in a man's heart. And I ne'er had no complaint. I was easy in my heart and mind, lak ne'er a-fore in my time of doen and strive-en. I'd a-been thar yit, I reckin, if'n I had'n a-took sick, and hit bad. Hit was in the summer of 'ninety, and we was in the high country, but hit looked lak sumthen went outer me. I wasn't good fer nuthen. Looked lak I couldn't raise my hand, the pith gone out of me. I'd jist set on the ground, and look up at the sky, how thin and blue hit was over them mountains. Then

the fever come. Hit taken me, and I said, "Willie Proudfit, you gonna die." That's what I said, and the words was in my head lak a bell. Then hit come to me, how other men was dead, and they taken hit the best they could and the bitterness, and I said, "Willie Proudfit, what air man kin do, you kin do." But the fever come agin, and I said, "You gonna die, and in a fer country."

'The Indians done what they could. They give me stuff to drink, black and bitter hit was, outer yerbs and sich, but hit ne'er done no good. I'd burn up with fever, then I'd lay and look and ever thing in the world was diff'rent to me. Wouldn't nuthen stay on my stomach, looked lak. And then the fever agin. The Indians treated me good. A man couldn't a-ast more. They give me them yerbs and sich, and hit ain't all foolishness. They knows what grows outer the earth in their country, hit's use the Lord give hit. I seen some mighty sick Indians them years I was thar, and seen 'em get well and walken. But the Lord had laid a powerful sickness on me, and I said, "Willie Proudfit, you gonna die."

'But no, ain't no man knows what the Lord's done marked out fer him. And many's the pore, weakid man done looked on the face of blessedness, bare-eyed, and ne'er knowed hit by name. Lak a blind man a-liften his face to the sun, and not knownen. Hit was a blessem the Lord laid on me, and I praise hit.

'Them Indians seen I was witheren up, lak a tree in the sun done had the axe at hit's root. Because they done called me brother and give me a name, they done ever thing they could. They built the medicine house, made a fire thar, and set me in the medicine house, and tried to take out the evil. Not jist one day, they was tryen to git the evil out. They set in thar and some of 'em had their faces all covered up with masks made outer leather and painted, and they waved eagle feathers on me to bring out the evil, and sometimes they put stuff on my head and my feet and my knees and my chist, stuff they done mixed up,

and sometimes corn meal. Sometimes hit was sand on my head. And sometimes they washed me with suds, just lak soap suds, they done made outer yerbs, and done dried me with corn meal. And agin they done put pine branches on me, and put stuff on the fire fer me to breathe and one thing and ernuther, and me too nigh gone to keer. And sometimes they done made pictures outer colored sand on the floor, and feathers and beads and sich, and they was singen and hooten, sometimes. To git out the evil. And they put me in them sweat houses, little houses not much bigger'n fer a man to lay in, and covered with dirt and sand, and pictures in colored sand, and a curtain outer deerskin fer a door. But hit had to be skin off'n a deer they done run down and smother with a man's hand, not shot or cut fer the killen. They put me in hit, and rocks they done got red hot, and sweated me. And one night they was dance-en all night hit looked lak, and singen, naked and painted white, I recollect, and the fires was burnen big.

'But the fever done had me sometimes, and hit was lak a dream. I was a-goen, and nuthen to lay holt on. And I didn't keer. The time comes and a man don't keer. They taken me out and laid me on the ground. Hit was night. I knowed that, then I was a-goen. I might been gone, fer all I know. They ain't no sayen.

'I might been gone, when hit come to me, what I seen. I seen a long road come-en down a hill, and green ever whar. Green grass layen fresh, and trees, maple and elm and sich. And my feet was in the road, and me a-move-en down hit. They was a fire in me, thirsten. Hit was a green country, and the shade cool, but the fire was in me. I come down the hill, and seen houses settin off down the valley, and roofs, and the green trees standen. I taken a bend in the road, and thar was a little church, a white church with a bell hangen, and the grass green a-fore hit. Thar was a spring thar, by the church, and I seen hit and run to hit. I put

my head down to the water, fer the fire in me, lak a dog gitten ready to lap. I didn't take no water in my hand and sup. Naw, I put my face down to the water, and hit was cool on me. The coolness was in me, and I taken my fill.

'No tellen how long, and I lifted up my head. Thar a girl was sitten, over thar nigh the spring, and she was a-looken at me. I opened my mouth but nary a word come out. Hit looked lak the words was big in me to busten, and none come.

'Then hit was finished and done, and I'd ne'er spoke. The dream, if'n hit was a dream. No tellen how long I laid thar, but I come to, hit was mornen light, gray, fer the rain was fall-en. I didn't have no fever. I laid thar, and my head was full of what all I'd been a-dreamen. They taken me in, and a-fore night I et a little sumthen, and hit stayed on my stomach. My strength come back, not fast, but hit come. All the time I was a-thinken what I'd seen, the church and the green trees standen, and the spring. Ever day. I'd seen hit, I knowed I'd seen hit, but I couldn't give hit the name. Then I knowed. Hit was the road come-en down to Thebes, in Kentucky, when I was a kid thar, and the church setten thar whar hit takes a bend. I ne'er seen hit since pappy done up and taken outer Kentucky fer Arkansas when the war come and he was on-easy in his mind, but hit come to me plain as day, and I said, "I'm a-goen thar."

'My strength come, and I done hit. I told them Indians good-bye, and they taken my hand. I come to Santa Fe, and up Oklahoma, lak I said, and on to Arkansas. I was gonna see my pappy, and my mammy, if'n the Lord had done spared 'em. I come in Arkansas at Fort Smith, and on east, whar my folks had been. My mammy was dead. Been dead a long time, folks said. And my pappy, he was dead too, but not more'n goen on a year. He was kilt, with a knife. A feller from up Missouri kilt him. He was setten down at a store one night, at the settlement, and ever-body was talken and goen on. They was a-talken about the war, and

how hit come. The feller from up Missouri, he was cussen the rebels, and my pappy said, naw, not to be a-cussen 'em that a-way, they didn't do hit, no more'n no other man. They had a argument, and the feller from up Missouri, he cut my pappy, and him a old man. The feller from up Missouri taken out, and was gone, no man knowed whar. And my pappy died, layen thar on the floor. I seen the place he was buried, and my mammy. Nobody knowed whar my brothers was gone, been gone a long time. Strange folks was a-live-en in the house my pappy'd done built long back, the house I'd seen him start builden that day he'd stood thar and looked whar hit was gonna set, sayen, "Lord God, Lord God," right soft, and then, sudden-lak, to ma, "Henrietta, gimme that-air axe!" I seen hit, the logs notched clean and set tight, and the chimney true, ne'er sunk nor slipped yit.

'I sold the place fer what I could git. I ne'er hemmed and hawed. Then I come on, on here to Kentucky, acrost Tennessee. I come on to Thebes. Hit was a hot day, when I come, but summer not on good yit. I come over the hill, down the road, and thar was the grass and the trees standen green. Lak hit is, and lak hit come to me that time. I taken the turn in the road, and thar was the church. New Bethany church, hit is. And the spring, and I run to hit, on-steady and nigh blind, with what come on me when I seen hit. I put my face down to the water. I taken my fill.

'I lifted up my head, slow. And thar she set.'

His voice stopped. In the silence, in the marshy ground down the creek the frogs were piping. Then he said: 'Hit was Adelle.'

'Yes,' his wife's voice said, quietly, from the shadow where her chair was, 'I was setten thar, in the shade of a sugar-tree, and I seen him come down the hill.'

## A CURTAIN OF GREEN<sup>1</sup>

BY EUDORA WELTY

EVERY day, one summer in Larkin's Hill, it rained a little. The rain was a regular thing, and would come about two o'clock in the afternoon.

One day, almost as late as five o'clock, the sun was still shining. It seemed almost to spin in a tiny groove in the polished sky, and down below, in the trees along the street and in the rows of flower gardens in the town, every leaf reflected the sun from a hardness like a mirror-surface. Nearly all the women sat at the windows of their houses, fanning and sighing, waiting for the rain.

Mrs. Larkin's garden was a large, densely grown plot running downhill behind the small white house where she lived alone since the death of her husband. The sun and the rain of that summer had not discouraged her from working there daily. Now the intense sun like a tweezers picked out her clumsy, slight figure in its old pair of men's overalls rolled up at the sleeves and trousers, separated it from the thick leaves and made it look strange and yellow as she worked with a hoe — overvigorous, disreputable, and heedless.

Within its border of hedge, high like a wall, and visible only from the upstairs windows of the neighbors, this slanting, tangled

garden, more and more overabundant and confusing, must have become so familiar to Mrs. Larkin that she might be unable by now to conceive of any other place. Since the accident in which her husband was killed, she had never once been seen anywhere else. Every morning she might be observed walking slowly, rather timidly, out of the white house, wearing a pair of the untidy overalls, often with her hair streaming and almost matted where she had neglected to comb it. She would wander about for a little while at first, uncertainly, deep among the plants and wet with their dew, and yet not quite putting out her hand to touch anything. And then a sort of sturdiness would possess her — stabilize her; she would stand still for a moment as if a blindfold had been removed; and then she would kneel in the flowers and begin to work.

She worked without stopping, almost invisibly, submerged all day among the thick, irregular, sloping beds of plants. The servant would call her at dinner time, and she would obey; but it was not until it was completely dark that she would truthfully give up her labor and with a drooping, submissive walk appear at the house, slowly opening the small low door at the back. Even the rain would bring only a pause to her; she would move to the shelter of the pear tree, which in mid-April hung heavily almost to the ground in brilliant full leaf, in the center of the garden.

It might seem as if the extreme fertility of her garden were at once a preoccupation and challenge to Mrs. Larkin. Only by ceaseless activity could she cope with the rich blackness of this soil. Only by cutting, separating, thinning, and tying back in the clumps of flowers and bushes and vines could she have kept them from overreaching their boundaries and multiplying out of all reason. The daily summer rains could only increase her vigilance and her already excessive energy. And yet, Mrs. Larkin rarely cut, separated, tied back.... To a certain extent, she

seemed not to seek for order, but to allow an overflowering, as if she consciously ventured now a little further, a little deeper, into her life in the garden.

She planted every kind of flower that she could find or order from a catalogue — planted thickly and hastily, without stopping to think, without any regard for the ideas that her neighbors might elect in their club as to what constituted an appropriate vista, or an effect of restfulness, or even harmony of color. Just to what end Mrs. Larkin worked so strenuously in her garden, her neighbors could not see. She certainly never sent a single one of her fine flowers to any of them. And if she thought of *beauty* at all (they regarded her stained overalls, now almost of a color with the leaves), she certainly did not strive for it in her garden. It was impossible to enjoy looking at such a place; to the neighbors gazing down from their upstairs windows, it had the appearance of a sort of jungle, in which the slight, heedless form of its owner daily lost itself.

At first, after the death of Mr. Larkin — for whose father, after all, the town had been named — they had called upon the widow with decent frequency; but she had not appreciated it, they said to one another. Now, occasionally, they looked down from their bedroom windows as they brushed studiously at their hair in the morning; they found her place in her garden, as they might have run their fingers toward a city in a map of a foreign country, located her from their distance almost in curiosity, and then forgot her.

Early that morning they had heard whistling in the Larkin garden. They had recognized Jamey's tune, and had seen him kneeling in the flowers at Mrs. Larkin's side. He was only the colored boy who worked in the neighborhood by the day. Even Jamey, it was said, Mrs. Larkin would tolerate only now and then....

Throughout the afternoon she had raised her head at intervals to see how fast he was getting along in his transplanting. She had not let him wait until after the rain to do it. She was busy with the hoe, clearing one of the last patches of uncultivated ground for some new shrubs. She bent under the sunlight, chopping in blunt, rapid, tireless strokes. Once she raised her head far back to stare at the flashing sky. Her eyes were dull and puckered, as if from long impatience or bewilderment. Her mouth was a sharp line. People said she never spoke.

But memory tightened about her easily, without any prelude of warning or even despair. She would see promptly, as if a curtain had been jerked quite unceremoniously away from a little scene, the front porch of the white house, the shady street in front, and the blue automobile in which her husband approached, driving home from work. It was a summer day, a day from the summer before. In the freedom of gaily turning her head, a motion she was now forced by memory to repeat as she hoed the ground, she could see again the tree that was going to fall. There had been no warning. But there was the enormous tree, the fragrant chinaberry tree, suddenly tilting, dark and slow like a cloud, leaning down to her husband. From her place on the front porch she had spoken in a soft voice to him, never so intimate as at that moment, 'You can't be killed.' But the tree had fallen, had struck the car exactly so as to crush him to death. She had waited there on the porch for a time afterwards, not moving at all — in a sort of recollection — as if to reach under and bring out from obliteration her protective words, and to try them once again . . . so as to change the whole happening. It was accident that was incredible, when her love for her husband was keeping him safe.

She continued to hoe the black ground, to beat down the juicy weeds. Presently she became aware that hers was the only motion to continue in the whole slackened place. There was no wind

at all now. The cries of the birds had hushed. The sun seemed clamped to the side of the sky. Everything had stopped once again; the stillness had mesmerized the stems of the plants, and all the leaves went suddenly into thickness. The shadow of the pear tree, in the center of the garden, lay callous on the ground. Across the yard, Jamey knelt motionless.

‘Jamey!’ she called angrily.

But her voice hardly carried in the dense garden. She felt all at once terrified, as though her loneliness had been pointed out by some outside force whose finger parted the hedge. She drew her hand for an instant to her breast. An obscure fluttering there frightened her, as though the force babbled to her, The bird that flies within your heart could not divide this cloudy air . . . She stared without expression at the garden. She clung to the hoe again, and stared across the green leaves toward Jamey.

A look of docility in the negro’s back as he knelt in the flowers began to infuriate her. She started to walk toward him, dragging the hoe vaguely through the flowers behind her. She forced herself to look at him, and noticed him closely for the first time — the way he looked like a child. As he turned his head a little to one side and negligently stirred the dirt with his yellow finger, she saw, with a sort of helpless suspicion and hunger, a soft, rather deprecating smile on his face; he was lost in some impossible dream of his own while he transplanted the zinnia shoots. He was not even whistling; even that sound was gone.

She walked nearer to him — he must have been deaf! — almost stealthily bearing down upon his laxity and his absorption, as if that glimpse of the side of his face, that turned-away smile, were a teasing, innocent, flickering, and beautiful vision — some mirage to her strained and wandering eyes.

Yet a feeling of stricture, of a responding hopelessness almost approaching ferocity, grew with alarming quickness about her. When she was directly behind him she stood quite still for a mo-

ment, in the queer, sheathed manner she had before beginning her gardening in the morning. Then she raised the hoe above her head; the clumsy sleeves fell back, exposing the thin, unsunburned whiteness of her arms, the shocking fact of their youth.

She gripped the handle tightly, tightly, as though convinced that the wood of the handle could feel, and that all her strength could indent its surface with pain. The head of Jamey, bent there below her, seemed witless, terrifying, wonderful, almost inaccessible to her, and yet in its explicit nearness meant surely for destruction, with its clustered hot woolly hair, its intricate glistening ears, its small brown branching streams of sweat, the bowed head holding so obviously and so deafly its ridiculous dream.

Such a head she could strike off, intentionally, so deeply did she know, from the effect of a man's danger and death, its cause in oblivion; and so helpless was she, too helpless to defy the workings of accident, of life and death, of unaccountability.... Life and death, she thought, gripping the heavy hoe, life and death, which now meant nothing to her, but which she was compelled to continue to wield with both her hands, ceaselessly, asking, Was it not possible to compensate? to punish? to protest? Pale darkness turned for a moment through the sunlight, like a narrow leaf blown through the garden in a wind.

In that moment, the rain came. The first drop touched her upraised arm. Small, close sounds and coolness touched her.

Sighing, Mrs. Larkin lowered the hoe to the ground and laid it carefully among the growing plants. She stood still where she was, close to Jamey, and listened to the rain falling. It was so gentle. It was so full — the sound of the end of waiting.

In the light from the rain, different from sunlight, everything appeared to gleam unreflecting from within itself, in its quiet arcade of identity. The green of the small zinnia shoots was very pure, almost burning. One by one, as the rain reached them, all the individual little plants shone out, and then the branching

vines. The pear tree gave a soft rushing noise, like the wings of a bird alighting. She could sense behind her, as if a lamp were lighted in the night, the signal-like whiteness of the house. Then Jamey, as if in the shock of realizing the rain had come, turned his full face toward her, questions and delight intensifying his smile, gathering up his aroused, stretching body. He stammered some disconnected words, shyly.

She did not answer Jamey or move at all. She would not feel anything now except the rain falling. She listened for its scattered soft drops between Jamey's words, its quiet touching of the spears of the iris leaves, and a clear sound like a bell as it began to fall in a pitcher the cook had set on the doorstep.

Finally, Jamey stood there quietly, as if waiting for his money, with his hand trying to brush his confusion away from before his face. The rain fell steadily. A wind of deep wet fragrance beat against her.

Then as if it had swelled and broken over a daily levee, tenderness tore and spun through her sagging body.

It has come, she thought senselessly, her head lifting and her eyes looking without understanding at the sky which had begun to move, to fold nearer in softening, dissolving clouds. It was almost dark. Soon the loud and gentle night of rain would come. It would pound upon the steep roof of the white house. Within, she would lie in her bed and hear the rain. On and on it would fall, beat and fall. The day's work would be over in the garden. She would lie in bed, her arms tired at her sides and in motionless peace: against that which was inexhaustible, there was no defense.

Then Mrs. Larken sank in one motion down into the flowers and lay there, fainting and streaked with rain. Her face was fully upturned, down among the plants, with the hair beaten away from her forehead and her open eyes closing at once when the rain touched them. Slowly her lips began to part. She seemed to move slightly, in the petulant adjustment of a sleeper.

Jamey ran jumping and crouching about her, drawing in his breath alternately at the flowers breaking under his feet and at the shapeless, passive figure on the ground. Then he became quiet, and stood back at a little distance and looked in awe at her unknowing face, white and rested under its bombardment. He remembered how something had filled him with stillness when he felt her standing there behind him looking down at him, and he would not have turned around at that moment for anything in the world. He remembered the oblivious crash of the windows next door being shut when the rain started . . . But now, in this unseen place, it was he who stood looking at Mrs. Larkin.

In a horrified, piteous, beseeching voice he began to call her name until she stirred.

‘Miss Lark’! Miss Lark’!’

Then he jumped nimbly to his feet and ran out of the garden.

## BLACK TOBIAS AND THE EMPIRE<sup>1</sup>

BY HEINZ WERNER

**F**ROM the time I first began to frequent cafés in Vienna, I knew 'Black Tobias.' It would have been difficult not to know him, for his lustrous, flowing black beard which gave him his name was a familiar sight to the Viennese public, the larger portion of whose life was spent in these cafés. He was a tall man of swarthy complexion whose age might have been anywhere from thirty to fifty.

He was married. Few of us had ever seen Hannah, but she was familiar to all, for he constantly spoke of her. It was apparent that she was a bit of a nag; it was also apparent that he was devoted to her and that he firmly believed her mild scolding a somewhat original, and to him, delightful manifestation of her love. Tobias bragged of his wife's fault-finding as other men brag of their wives' cooking. They seemed to enjoy a harmony in marriage that was carried into their business.

Hannah ran a small store in which she sold soap, oils, and candles. Tobias spent his mornings there carrying cases, cleaning the store, fixing the windows, and putting everything in good order for the day's business.

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by Esquire-Coronet, Inc.

But this was not his life's work. Ah no! It was in the afternoons and evenings that Tobias really lived. It was then that his business brought him into contact with society, nobility, and military men of high rank.

He was a peddler. He carried with him a box of neatly arranged small merchandise, such as matches, shoelaces, pencils, and key rings. From five in the afternoon to eleven in the evening he covered a number of cafés, and from midnight on he worked night clubs and cabarets until early morning. He lived a well-regulated life and his earnings were considerable. This was largely because, as he explained, 'my patrons hardly ever bother to take a box of matches or a pair of shoelaces but always deposit on my tray fifty heller, or if they are noblemen, a whole krone.'

There were many peddlers in Vienna, but none like Black Tobias. He was more than a vendor, for he was the peg on which all the wits of Vienna hung their favorite stories, true and untrue. Tobias was variously credited with the sagacity of a patriarch, the stupidity of a clod, the cupidity of a peasant, and the generosity of an Oriental potentate.

He knew his business, but more than that, he knew people. The wiseacres were not all wrong; Tobias was indeed all things to all men. He sensed and acted the rôle in which one chose to cast him.

But there was one rôle which required no acting, that of a devoted subject of the Hapsburgs.

Hannah's store was on the Leopoldsgasse, a street through which Archduke Carl passed every day on the way to see his mother in the Augarten. Black Tobias knew that the carriage went by every day at ten-thirty in the morning, and every day for years he would bow deeply when the carriage passed and greet the Archduke heartily, 'Good morning, Majesty.'

When I once objected that though Crown Prince Ferdinand was dead, Carl was not yet the Emperor, and that the Empire

cannot have two majesties, he only smiled and said, 'Well, with the Emperor being eighty-six, Carl is practically His Majesty. Besides, he likes to be called so, and furthermore, I am his friend. He said so publicly to about a dozen generals and colonels. Yes, I am his friend and he is my friend.'

He probably read some doubt in my face because he continued, 'Yes, one evening, some six months ago, he called me his friend. Do you want to hear it?' And not waiting for my answer, he continued:

'It happened like this. My night route brought me to the Trocadero. Do you know the Trocadero, were you ever there? You know, it is a frightfully expensive place. It's really only for princes and noblemen and war profiteers and high officers and such.

'Well, my peddler's box and I come in, and there I notice His Majesty, I mean the Crown Prince, amid a group of generals or colonels. They sat at a table and two waiters were serving from three Champagne coolers. Judging from the loud laughter, these champagne coolers must have been refilled many times before I came.

'I was a little embarrassed. After all, who am I to see His Majesty, I mean the Crown Prince, in an — hem — ahem — hem — undignified condition? And then, also — well, you see, I love my peddler's profession and wouldn't change it for any other — but I wanted His Majesty always to think of me as the shopkeeper on Leopoldsgasse, the owner of a soap and candle store. Well, when I saw His Majesty at the center table, I quickly turned away and began to peddle at the tables toward the entrance. I wanted to get out as quickly as I could without attracting attention. But it was too late. His Majesty noticed me, or perhaps my black beard, because I heard him shout "There is my friend from the Leopoldsgasse. Waiter, don't let him go out, bring him to me!" And before I knew, two strong waiters grabbed my arms and there I stood before His Majesty.

‘And His Majesty got up, just a little unsteady on his legs, and turning to his circle of friends, said: “Gentlemen, this is my good friend, my good Jewish friend from the Leopoldsgasse. He greets me every morning when I am on my way to the Augarten. And when I hear his ‘Good morning, Majesty,’ I know that all is well in the Empire. And on some mornings, when I do not feel like driving out to the Augarten, I still do it, because I could not disappoint my friend. It has practically become a superstition with me. I sometimes fear that if one day he would not be there to greet me, or I would not appear to be greeted, why, the Empire would fall apart, the end would come for the Hapsburgs! Gentlemen, here is a toast to my friend from the Leopoldsgasse!” It was a great moment. Just think, all the uniforms getting up from their seats and drinking to me, toasting me — me, Black Tobias. I stood there, surrounded by all the generals, and they gave me a glass of champagne, and another, and urged me to drink. And I drank champagne with His Majesty. Do you understand, I, Black Tobias, drank with a Hapsburg!

‘And then His Majesty said: “Now, my friend, I see you are a merchant. A merchant in a small way, but a merchant just the same. Very laudable, very laudable. Tell me, what else do you do besides selling your wares? I mean — do you play an instrument, do you know any tricks, do you dance — what I mean, do you do anything for recreation?”

‘I never dreamt that His Majesty would be interested in his subjects, in so humble a subject as “Black Tobias.” I was bewildered, I was speechless — my knees almost gave in — and then, I gathered all my courage, bowed deeply and said: “Your Majesty, what hobbies can a poor peddler have? Instruments? Tricks? Dance? No, Your Majesty, I regret. I only peddle all week long, and on Saturdays, I go to the Temple. We never fail to include a prayer for Your Majesty’s health and for victory for our armies. It is a happy prayer and the Temple is filled with

joy because a week of hard work is behind and our Sabbath is given to prayer and rest. We rejoice and we chant our psalms. It is a day to which I look forward all week long, Your Majesty. But tricks, hobbies, no, Your Majesty, I am sorry!"

'And then His Majesty asked me whether I can sing the psalms we sing in the Temple. "Yes, Your Majesty," I answered, "I know many of them by heart; I think, I know all of them by heart." "Well," he said, "let's hear them."

'And because it was His Majesty's command and because I knew God will forgive me the blasphemy, I swallowed and said, almost in a whisper, "If it pleases Your Majesty."

'His Majesty and the generals made a circle around me and made me stand up on a chair. The Master of Ceremonies was motioned to disappear, the orchestra stopped in the middle of a fox trot, and suddenly it was quiet in the night club. The Trocadero was transformed into a Temple, into a House of God, and I, Black Tobias, was chosen to sing for the glory of our God, with His Majesty as my audience. And I began. My voice shook and I did not remember the Hebrew words. And then all went black before my eyes, I forgot the Trocadero, I forgot His Majesty and his generals. I was again in my Temple, it was Sabbath, I was chanting our holy songs to our God.

'I cannot tell how long I sang. One psalm followed another, my voice seemed stronger, clearer, my body swayed back and forth, my voice grew higher and higher and when it reached the highest pitch, I shouted "Shemah Yisroel" — and stopped.

'And suddenly I was back in the Trocadero. Although I stopped, all was quiet around me and for a moment I thought that His Majesty was displeased. But then, as if awakened, all applauded, His Majesty too, and the Trocadero was again as noisy as when I entered. I was exhausted and barely whispering "Thank you, Majesty," I walked out of the night club, but not before I heard His Majesty softly say, "Thank you, mein lieber

Freund." The night was early and I continued on my route, first to the Simplicissimus, then to the Ronacher, and finally to the Apollo.

"The next morning at ten-thirty His Majesty passed again and I was there with my usual "Good morning, Majesty." He smiled as usual and I was sure that he did not remember that I sang for him the night before, just a few hours ago.

'But soon I had occasion to find out that he was my friend. During the war, soap and oil became very scarce and the Police were systematically raiding stores and confiscating supplies which were found in excess of a certain ration. One evening the Police raided my wife's store and took away all we had. Two truck loads were removed to Police Headquarters — we were ruined.

'I was desperate. I was determined to appeal to the highest authority, to my friend, the Emperor. And the next morning at ten-thirty, when I saw the imperial carriage approaching, I ran out into the street and fell on my knees in front of the horses. The carriage stopped and His Majesty leaned out of the carriage. "What is it, my friend?" he asked in a perfectly natural, not irritated voice. "Mercy, Your Majesty, and forgiveness for my impertinence. Your poor servant begs your mercy. The Police have confiscated all my merchandise, emptied my store. I am ruined, Majesty, mercy." His Majesty smiled. "Your merchandise shall be returned to you, my dear fellow. What is your name?"

'And you wouldn't believe it. The very afternoon two truck loads parked in front of the store and unloaded cases upon cases of soap and barrels of oil, and candles — in fact, all that was confiscated the day before. All that was done without any explanation, for there could be no explanation. The policemen did not know that the Emperor and I were old friends, and they would not have believed it if I told them so.'

Time passed. The old Emperor Franz Joseph died and Carl became Emperor. The war entered now the fourth year, the mass murder for false ideals continued and seemed to gain momentum as if drawing renewed strength from secret, super-human sources. I no longer frequented the cafés along Black Tobias's route, they were too expensive. Thus it was purely by accident that I met him shortly after the war. He had changed greatly. There was no doubt now about his age. I asked him how he had been getting along and he threw up his hands in an inimitable gesture of despair: 'Oh, these years, these last black years ...' He sounded really tragic, and I wondered what could have brought such a change in Tobias's sanguine outlook on life. It was not difficult to persuade him to have coffee with me and once in the café, he repeated, 'Yes, yes, black years these have been ...'

'Tell me, Tobias,' I prompted, 'what happened after the Emperor had your merchandise returned?'

'What happened! What hasn't happened?' Tobias seemed excited and utterly unhappy. He continued:

'The old Emperor Franz Joseph died and my Majesty became Emperor. But still he followed his old habits and I saw him every morning. It now became a duty with me. Hadn't the Majesty said in the Trocadero that night that the House of Hapsburg would fall if we two did not meet every morning?'

'The war seemed to last forever. The second, the third year came to an end, the fourth year was almost over — and the armies were still fighting with ever increasing fury. Millions died, other millions were crippled, the people all over Europe were starving, but the armies fought battle after battle.'

'I was peddling my peddler's box night after night. Business was not good. The people no longer put coins in my box but actually bought my matches and shoestrings and even bargained for lower prices. Imagine my patrons asking the price of a pair of shoelaces?'

'My Hannah was not well for a long time; she didn't even nag any more. Many big doctors were my customers and all offered their help. She had good care, my Hannah, but little by little she seemed to fade away and late one night she died. The Temple and the Congregation were notified and funeral services were held on the third day, as the ritual prescribes.

'It was November 11, 1918, a cold, dreary morning, when the funeral procession began. They dressed me in my Sabbath clothes, put me in a carriage, and we proceeded toward the Zentral-Friedhof, the Central Cemetery. My wife was dead — my Hannah was dead . . . The rain drops were repeating it — my wife was dead — my heart hammered it — my Hannah was dead . . . Forgotten was my Emperor, forgotten the war, its victories and defeats — my Hannah was dead . . . That night and the previous three, four nights, I did not visit the night clubs. I did not notice anything around me, I didn't read the newspapers, I was dead to the world and the world was dead to me, my Hannah was gone . . .

'Three days later — I happened to look at the clock, it was ten-fifteen. My thoughts automatically wandered to the Emperor, and I wondered whether he noticed that I was not at the customary place to bid him the customary good morning. My curiosity was aroused and I decided to step out into the street and wait for the Emperor. Ten-thirty, ten-forty-five, and still no carriage and no Emperor. I looked at my watch and asked a passerby for the right time. It was ten to eleven. That was strange, what could have happened to His Majesty? Perhaps he left for the front, perhaps his army needed moral support? Was he ill?

'Herr Kratochwil, the Socialist, just then came out of his apartment and I stopped him: "Did you see the Emperor pass by today, or yesterday?"

'He stared at me — and then laughed out loud and began calling the neighbors together: "That's a good one! Listen, folks,

that's a good joke! Black Tobias asks for His Majesty, for his Emperor! Ha — ha — ha — ha — Black Tobias wants to bow deeply. 'Good morning, Majesty! Ja, ja, Your Majesty, ha — ha — ha.'"

'I walked away from that disrespectful crowd which joined Kratochwil in wild laughter. I was bewildered. I did not understand the meaning of all this. I escaped into the store of Herr Spira and asked him.

"'Where were you the last few days, Tobias?' he asked. "Did you not hear what happened? Don't you know about the revolution, about the abdication of Emperor Carl? Don't you know that there is no more an Austrian-Hungarian Empire? Don't you know that the war is lost? That Emperor Carl was chased out of Vienna? That new republics were established? That you live now in the Republic of Austria? Yes, Tobias, the Empire is gone, the Hapsburgs are gone, ach, what a world ..."

"'Yes,' I said. "Yes, I know now. Yes, it is all my fault, all my fault ..." But Herr Spira, of course, did not understand, he could not understand. And as I walked toward my room, I whispered to myself the words the Emperor said in the Trocadero that night, long, long ago — "I fear that if one day he would not be there to greet me, the Empire would fall apart, the end would come for the Hapsburgs" ...'

## THE WAY THE LUCK RUNS<sup>1</sup>

BY IRA WOLFERT

**T**E two fermented apple pies I had had for breakfast had been pretty filling, but that had been a long time ago, and this fellow looked like meat to me. I thought that when the time came I'd make a play for a feed.

I waited for him to talk himself out while we rolled along in the cool of the evening. Yes, sir, that's when it was, in the cool of the gloaming. He was a thin little pale man with a natty mustache. He looked like a brushed-up clerk, but I guess he was a cigar salesman. He had a brief case and a pile of cigar boxes in the back of the car. His face looked soft. When he put a scowl on or acted hard you could see the weakness quavering under it. I thought, 'My luck's going to change now. He's good for meat and potatoes.'

That seemed to me so sure, it made me feel rested and I could look out the window and notice the time of day and enjoy seeing that it was getting on into evening. My luck needed changing. It had been needing it since two weeks after I ran out of money and a job in Logansport and the landlady locked me out.

The landlady met me at the door when I came in and told me she wouldn't let me into my room until I paid what I owed. I had

to think fast. Everything I owned that stood between me and being a bum was in that room. I asked her if she'd be so kind and sweet and obliging as to let me go upstairs and copy off my stepmother's address. My stepmother wasn't anything to me. She had been married to my father four months when I lit out on my own and I saw her only once after that, a year ago at my father's funeral. A fellow from home, whom I met on a job in Dallas, told me about her new marriage and I wrote down her address, figuring some day maybe I would write to her. Well, it was something to think of as an excuse to get into the room. Once I got in there, I figured, I'd be able to get some of my clothes out under my shirt and in my pants.

But the landlady went upstairs with me and stood there watching me. I said, 'Can I take my shaving stuff too, because you can't get anything selling it, and maybe an extra shirt, one of the old ones? I'll leave all the rest.' She let me take the shaving stuff. 'I can't help myself,' she said, 'I got to eat too.' 'That's right,' I said. 'All God's chillun got to eat.' 'I don't run a rooming-house because I enjoy it,' she said, and I said, 'Guess that's the trouble with all God's chillun. They got to eat every day in the week, three times a day.'

When I was out in the street and started thinking what I was up against, I got scared. I didn't have a dime. I could push my hands into my pockets clear down to the seams without touching anything. My stepmother's address was the only thing I had. Finally I figured out that I'd be better off beating my way back on the road instead of hopping a freight. I thought, on the road you can pick up food and you're meeting people all the time and you might just talk yourself into a job and not have to go to Harrisburg at all. Well, that shows how much I knew, six days ago, back there in Logansport.

I had luck getting across Louisiana. I suppose I should have headed north, but the rides were all going east and south. I took

them as they came and I figured it was all right because I didn't have an overcoat anyway and the North was likely to be cold in November. But when I crossed the line into Mississippi I started to learn things — about vagrancy in the back country meaning thirty, sixty days on the chain gang or meaning running the gauntlet through a bunch of farmers out back of the jail, everybody taking slugs at you and having a fine time breaking the blood out of you and the sheriff coming up at the end and giving you a root in the pants and saying, 'That's a sample, anytime you want more just come back.' I guess they have to be tough in the winter or they'd have every bum in the country on their necks, stealing whatever is loose. Keep moving, keep moving! As long as you keep moving on through they let you alone.

In country like that you're no ant at a picnic. You're afraid to ask a fellow for a handout because that would show you're a vagrant and you just keep moving, keeping the cops off you by sticking to the highways and making out you're not interested in anything except getting some place else.

It didn't get real bad until last night when I went to sleep hungry in an oak patch. I woke up in the middle of the night with my stomach so raw and hot from hunger I couldn't sleep any more. I guess it must have been one or two o'clock when I woke up. It must have been three or four hours that I lay there in the oak patch waiting for sunup. I waited because the fellow who walks an Alabama road at night, when there is no chance to grab a ride, is going to get picked up sure by one of those cruising cops. I drank water out of a brook to fill my stomach up with something. It was that muddy red water that tastes warm and slimy and makes you feel you're licking a frog. I drank so much of it that it hurt me inside to stand up. But it didn't help the hunger and I just lay there with my belly all swollen with water and hunger.

When the day finally came I walked the couple miles into

Dothan and went round to the back of the hotel there into the kitchen. A sleepy-eyed nigger was crisping bacon and had a pot of coffee going and there was an aroma that made my mouth water so much I had to swallow several times before I could say a word. He gave me the two fermented pies.

I asked the nigger, 'Can you spare a cup of coffee? Just black, I wouldn't want sugar or milk,' and he told me no. 'Hear white trash talkin',' he said. 'Maybe he wouldn't want some po'k sossages y'either, no-suh.' They throw out fermented pies, but I guess they never throw out coffee.

Well, I looked all set for tonight anyway and I could stop thinking about getting hungry and about being afraid to ask for something to eat and that what happened last night was going to happen again tonight sure as hell is hot. I could sit back and enjoy the ride and enjoy sitting side by side with this fellow, in the same car, bouncing over the same bumps, looking at the same stretch of road, side by side, shoulder to shoulder, almost like I was a member of the family and there was nothing between us but the same thoughts.

All the same I couldn't forget for long that he was in the driver's seat and I was just something he had picked up. He had seen my thumb and put on his brakes and pulled to the side because he had no radio in the car and was lonely for something to talk to. I went running along the road after him, head down, running hard because I didn't want to inconvenience him.

'You going to Valdosta?' I said. I had learned that much. I had learned it's always good at the start to make it look as if you're heading somewhere definite.

'Past there,' he said.

'Well, that's fine,' I told him. 'I'm going past there too.'

He kept talking how 1938 was just 1930 all over again only people didn't have so much fat under their belts now as then and scared more easily, and I kept telling him, Guess you're right all

right, and kept thinking it did me good to hear him talk. Even if he was singing the blues, it was good not to be listening to myself thinking, 'If only I passed a field with something growing in it besides cotton stalks, if only somebody dropped something on the road, a camera or a pair of eyeglasses or a fifty-cent piece or a twenty-dollar bill.'

After a while he was beginning to run down and I picked a silent minute and said, 'Say, do you know where a fellow can get something to eat around here?'

'Eat?' he said, 'eat?' Like it was something he had never heard of. 'I'm not stopping anywhere, if that's what you want to know. You can get out at any of these bar-b-q's, but I can't wait for you. I'm in a hurry.'

He had got the idea all right. I could tell by the way he stiffened up that he knew I was trying to touch him for a feed. I didn't say anything. I wasn't going to press the point in chain-gang country and he kept looking straight ahead, his body stiff, his face set hard, the weakness quavering on it under the scowl. I knew he felt I had pegged him for a sucker because he had stopped to give me a ride. He was sore that I should think he was an easy mark.

I hoped he'd start talking and get back to where he felt comfortable again and let me ride with him into Valdosta at least. But after a few minutes he said, 'I'm turning off here. You better stick on the main road.' I knew how he felt. I had been in the same boat myself — sore and ashamed and not seeing any way to climb down.

'Thanks, mister,' I said, but he was still hot and he only nodded at me from a stiff neck and did not turn his head. I watched him go straight on down the highway, making no turn, and I said, out loud slowly, 'Mister, you stink.'

There was some kind of luck running my way anyway. I didn't have to walk long. Two niggers came along in an empty truck. They were going to Waycross.

A fellow once told me, long ago, when I didn't need to know, when I had money in my pocket and keys and nothing to worry about except what a mutt the boss was or what to do on Saturday night, that you can always tap a nigger for something. He said it made a nigger feel important to help out a white man. But, I thought, what's the use asking these fellows and taking a chance of getting kicked off. They didn't look as if they had anything anyway and Waycross was a big town, almost as big as Dothan. I had a chance there.

I told myself I'd catch a freight. The hell with this bumming along the road. I'd just sit in the freight and think how hungry I was for two days or maybe two nights and two days. But at least I'd be moving and have the feeling I'm getting somewhere to the end of all this fast. I wouldn't be walking along cotton patches or bare orchards thinking what I'd be having if this was Indiana or Virginia or Maryland or Pennsylvania. There would be no more of this being afraid to stop in the daytime and being afraid to go in the night-time because that would get the cops on you, and no more of this thinking about the cars going by with money inside them and the smell of frying from the bar-b-q stands and a fellow driving by with a toothpick in his mouth and grease on his lips and a girl coming by drunk, singing, with maybe two dollars' worth of liquor in her at bar prices. She'd poured enough liquor down her throat to buy me a week's worth of pork chops.

We got to Waycross about ten o'clock, which was more luck for me. Supper trade was over and you always had a chance for a handout from a restaurant. If they wanted to they'd give you the stuff they knew they couldn't sell any more and that would spoil by morning, a bowl of soup or something. Anyway, I heard that somewhere. Knocking around from job to job, I heard tell of so many things that keep coming back to me, it seems like I must have been training to be a bum all my life without knowing.

The first place I looked into was too crowded. There were six

or eight people sitting around eating. I didn't want to make a show of myself. The next place there was only a fellow and his girl sitting over a cup of coffee, looking at each other like they were something to eat, and the counter-man sitting on a stool by the cash register, reading a paper. The Waycross *Journal-Herald*. He was turned to the comic page. He was a nice-looking young fellow, a blue-eyed, black-haired Irishman with wet lips and rosy cheeks. He had only one arm.

'Mister,' I said in a low tone of voice. He looked up startled. 'Have you got any work for me to do?'

His mouth was open and the fright had gone out of his face. 'That's all taken care of,' he said. He was trying to keep his face emotionless and I thought suddenly, he sure looks plenty dumb.

'Sweeping up,' I said, 'dishes, laundry work, polishing the silver.'

'No,' he said, shaking his head slowly, 'that's all taken care of.'

'For a bowl of soup or a piece of fish or something that you're going to have to throw out when you close anyway.'

'All taken care of,' he said.

He was looking past me, beyond my shoulder, trying not to see me. Well, you dumb oof, I thought, just because you started saying no, can't you change the record? I would have to pick a guy whose first instinct is to say no to anything that comes up unexpectedly. But, that kind of guy is all right if you play him right, if you can hang around long enough to give his mind a chance to get used to what you're asking.

'I could empty the garbage for you or burn it,' I said, 'or maybe chop some wood. Do you burn wood in the kitchen?' He looked like a nice fellow. He really looked nice. I talked very slowly and I thought if I just stand in front of him long enough he'll melt down.

Then I noticed there was someone alongside me, looking me up and down, and I turned around and saw it was a cop. I felt

sick. I felt the hackles rise at the base of my skull. I started to walk past him. I got a couple steps toward the door and he said, 'Wait a minute.' I wanted to run. I thought, 'I'll break through the door. How many steps to the corner and around it and out of sight? But the cop'll be after me and then what?'

I stopped and he came toward me slowly, looking me up and down, his fat red face fixed and his small eyes rising and falling in his head and then fastening on my face. 'Where you come from, boy?' he said.

'Valdosta,' I told him.

'You don't talk like a Georgia boy.'

'No, sir,' I said. 'My family hasn't been in Georgia very long.'

'Your family,' he said, 'who's your family?'

'My pa and ma and my sister Jenny, and her husband and their boy, my nephew. He's three years old.'

'Where do you live in Valdosta?'

'On the highway, on number eighty-four, just back in from that bar-b-q stand nearest to town.'

I thought the minute I said it, that was a mistake. It came from getting too confident. If he asked me what bar-b-q stand, I was licked. But he wasn't so quick on the uptake. He was just a dumb cop and all he did was keep plodding along.

'What you doing here?' he asked.

'I wanted to see what Waycross looked like,' I said. 'I hitched a ride in and I want to get back home tonight or tomorrow morning early. I haven't got the fare back or the price of supper and I thought if I did some work in here he'd give me a bowl of soup.'

'Hitched?' he said. 'That ain't Georgia talk.'

'No, sir,' I said, 'my family just come into Georgia not long ago from Harrisburg, Pa.'

He asked me a lot more questions and I answered him and he thought over the answers and at last he said, 'Listen, boy, we don't bother your kind as long as you keep moving.'

'Yes, sir,' I said.

'You're a nice-looking fellow,' he said, 'and I don't want to have to lay this across your mouth.' He touched the butt of his gun.

'Yes, sir,' I said. 'I don't want any trouble. All I want is to get home.'

'All right, git.'

'Thank you, your honor,' I said and went through the door, the fellow and his girl watching me, that one-armed counter-man watching me and the cop watching me. I felt more like a plain no-good bum than I had ever felt.

I went along for a few blocks, taking every corner until I thought I had lost the cop. Maybe they got a mission house in this town, I thought, maybe they got a Salvation Army, but how am I going to find out, who am I going to ask when anybody at all that you stop in the street is likely to feel, 'We got to be rough on bums or they'll be loading us down all winter; we got to keep 'em moving'? Besides, this town looked too small for a mission house. I don't care, I thought, I'm not going to go through anything like last night again if it costs me the rest of my life on a chain gang.

While I walked looking, seeing the drugstores, seeing people eat ice cream and sandwiches and a man chewing a bar of candy, I kept thinking about this one-armed fellow and how he had a job and plenty to eat. Any time he wanted, I thought, he could fry himself a hamburger or dish himself a bowl of chili and eat so much, any time he felt like, that his belt would cut into his belly and he'd have to loosen his pants. God Almighty! I'd give up an arm for that kind of life, I thought. What good is an arm if you haven't got a fork to lift with it? I'd give up two arms and my legs too. If I just kept getting enough to eat, I wouldn't want to walk any more. I wouldn't want to do anything.

I couldn't imagine any kind of life better than just lying still waiting to get hungry enough to eat. Meat and potatoes, that

was the stuff. Oatmeal and eggs and ham steak and pancakes and sausages for breakfast, meat and potatoes and soup for lunch, meat and potatoes and soup for supper and maybe you would feel like eating some more in the middle of the day and you would just fry up a hamburger and onions for yourself on a soft roll with warm gravy all over the roll, dripping on your fingers, or maybe break open a can of salmon or beans and then, before going to bed, cold chicken leg with some cold boiled potatoes, putting salt on them and just tossing them into your mouth whole and all cold from the icebox. I'd give my eyes and my ears and my arms and legs to live a life like that.

I saw another eatery and I started looking in to size up the joint, when I noticed a car pull up and looked around and there was the cop sitting there looking at me. 'Hello,' I said. I tried to smile at him. It was kind of funny, Mr. Jinx riding around after me in a car. But he didn't smile back and I began to walk again, down the street, at a good fast pace. I could feel gas blowing up my stomach and I thought, that's fine, at least I got something in there. And I could feel the skin riding up and down my ribs as my arms swung.

I knew I'd have to go out of town now and sneak back later for a freight, but every time I thought of last night and living through two nights like last night in a freight, I got so scared I felt weak. I was in a row of private houses, all dark, and I thought, I'll just have to take a chance, that's all. The way I felt then, ten years on a chain gang couldn't add up in suffering to another night without food.

There was one house with a 'tourists' sign on the lawn, a brick house, and I walked around the back, up a few wooden steps, and rang a bell. The bell worked. That was a good sign. When a house is kept up so well even the back bell works it means there's money in it.

I took my hat off. I could feel my head pounding and echoing

and making a surprising amount of noise in this still, dark, back-yard world. I stood there a long time, tasting a sweetness in the air, feeling the back of my neck grow cool where wet hair touched it, seeing the cracked white paint on the door. It was so quiet there. I could even hear the cool, sweet breeze go through the air like breathing. Finally there came steps, not rapid, slow, timid, and a high rattle of a voice said, 'Who's there?'

'Meat 'spection service,' I said. I said it fast so she couldn't understand the words and would think it must be something official and open the door.

'What?' she said.

I had a sinking feeling. I couldn't talk through a closed door. I couldn't holler into all this silence that I was hungry and wanted something to eat. 'Emergency service, ma'am,' I said. I tried to make my voice sound official and disinterested, but it came out all ragged.

'What do you want?' she said. 'I didn't send for anybody.' She sounded frightened.

I made my mistake not going around to the front like a tourist. Then she'd have opened the door and I might have had a chance. 'I want something to eat, ma'am,' I said. 'I'll do any work for you if you give me something to eat.'

I didn't hear anything for a long time. I thought she was going to pull a surprise and open the door after all. 'Go away,' she said at last, 'or I'll call the police. Coming around here this hour of the night.'

'Yes, ma'am,' I said. 'I'll go away. I'm just hungry.'

But she hadn't waited to hear me. I could hear her walking off to the front of the house before I started to answer. I went down the steps and along the side of the house toward the street and I saw her standing with the mouthpiece of the telephone covering her lips. A tall, pale, gray, frightened-looking woman, her face wrinkled and soured. Hundred-dollar-a-month old maid school-

teacher, I thought, trying to keep up a big house by taking in tourists and not having much luck in this out-of-the-way neighborhood. Then suddenly it hit me that she must be talking to the police telling them there was a suspicious character raiding back doors.

I wanted to pick up a brick and throw it right through that nice, clean, shining window, past the nice, white, lace curtains, and crack her skull with it. I even thought how thin her skull looked, the skin on it blued like watered milk, and what that rattling voice would sound like in a scream. Then I wanted just to sit still on the curb in front of the house and when the cops came they'd find me with my head hanging down between my knees and they'd say, 'This guy is just pooped out, that's all.' But, I thought, maybe they got a gauntlet in this town. Maybe they give vags six months on the gang. Maybe they'll work me over and try to get me to own up to every unsolved job of thieving and stabbing and raping in the neighborhood for the last thirty years.

No, I thought, no! I started to run. I came out on the wide, dark, empty street and ran desperately on tiptoe. Then I got hold of myself. 'What's the best thing?' I thought. 'Think of the best thing to do. If I keep going I'll stick out all over these deserted streets. If I hide, if they find me hiding somewhere, then they'll feel for sure I'm a crook. I've got a minute to do something. Do something! What? What?'

I was around the corner now and I walked up to the front door of the first house that had a light in it and rang the bell. I figured that was my best chance. If I got in, all right. If I didn't, well, at least they'd find me on a front porch and know I couldn't be out stealing.

The bell didn't work. I knocked on the warped frame of the rusty, torn screen door and waited, thinking, I'll tell whoever comes to the door just what happened and just what I'm up

against and maybe my luck will change. Maybe I'll get a feed out of it. 'You poor boy!' I could hear her saying it. 'You poor boy!' But she'd have to come fast. Seconds now, seconds now. I could just see that radio car sneaking up, lights out, Mr. Jinx in it. It would be Mr. Jinx. A town like this would have only one cop on car patrol at night.

I pulled open the screen door and rapped on the wooden door inside. It swung open a little bit. I stepped back, frightened. I never expected anything like that. I could see a block of light splitting out from the open door and I heard a deep, snoring sound behind the door, a struggle of breath.

Somebody sleeping, I thought. I knocked on the door as loud as I dared in that quiet neighborhood. Too loud, I'll have the whole town on my neck. 'Hello,' I said, 'anybody there?' I pushed the door open slowly and looked in and in the middle of the room, right before my eyes, a fellow was sitting at a round, bare, fumed oak table, his long, thin body hunched over a cup, his nose stuck almost into the cup, breathing deep, sucking up the fumes. I could smell the sharp, spicy odor of tincture of benzoin.

He was sitting sideways to the door and he never even looked around when I walked in. He heard me. I knew he heard me, but he was past bothering. He kept his face over the cup and sucked up the fumes in long, deep, struggling snores. I once knew a lady who breathed like that when she got an asthmatic attack, but she had an atomizer that she stuck into her nose and worked when it happened. This stuff in the cup was new to me, but I thought it must be asthma because he had a look of such tired intensity. He looked like he thought if he pulled his nose away from the cup for a minute, he would strangle to death.

I walked in slowly and closed the door. My breath came tight. It had given me such a turn to come upon him all of a sudden like that. The house was so quiet I knew we must be alone in it. It began to feel spooky with the clock ticking on the mantelpiece

and a cat standing stiff and silent in the corner, staring at me round-eyed, soundless, its back at the beginning of an arch, and this tall, thin dark man with a sunken face, sad and terrified as he struggled for breath over a cup.

I came around in front of him. 'I'm in a hell of a jam,' I said. It sounded like the wrong thing. What the hell was he in if not a hell of a jam? But I couldn't get used to the idea that he was too sick to worry about me. I felt I had to explain how I came in. 'I stopped at that tourist home around the corner,' I said, 'and asked for something to eat and the lady there called the cops. Now I don't know what to do. I give you my word that's all I did.'

He looked at me once in an exhausted, indifferent way and then he turned his eyes downward into the cup. I could see he wasn't even thinking about what I had said. I didn't even know if he had heard me, what with the rasping of the air through his nose and the long convulsive heaves of his chest, but even if he had heard, I was sure he hadn't taken it in.

'I don't want to bother you at a time like this,' I said. I looked around and saw that the kitchen was just in back. The tip of the icebox — a nice, shiny frigidaire — stuck out and I thought, 'There's cold meat and potatoes in a nice icebox like that. He can't do anything to me. I'll just go around and help myself. He can't move away from that cup. He can't even let out a holler. Here's where I get fed and slip out and the hell with him.'

I went a little crazy at the thought of being so close to food. I wanted to get tough with him. I had to hold myself in to keep my voice soft. 'Mister, I see you're in trouble,' I said. 'But I'm in trouble too. I'm starving. I'm crazy with hunger. Can I go in the icebox and get myself something?'

He didn't answer me. He was too intent on his breathing. I felt violently angry.

'You big damn fool,' I thought, 'don't you know I got you

by the short hairs? Don't you know that all I got to do is pull that cup away from your nose and I got you? I can kill you.' I felt all choked up with hate and anger. 'I'm going to get something to eat,' I told him. I didn't know how long his attack was going to last, but I didn't care any more. I walked into the kitchen.

I had just time to open the icebox when I heard heavy steps running up the porch and heard the door creak open. 'I don't want to get caught here,' I thought. 'If that's somebody from the family, I'll come out saying I've been hunting up something to help him. Water, a wet cloth for his head to make him feel easier.'

I swung in line with the door and looked out and saw this cop — my Mr. Jinx — standing there with his mouth open, his face stricken, as he looked pityingly at the suffering man.

'You got another attack, Mr. Dunfee?' he said. I stood still, afraid to move, afraid to make a sound by ducking back out of sight. I knew if this cop saw me now, whatever I said I wouldn't be able to talk myself out of it. With any other cop, I might have had a chance, but not with Mr. Jinx. I hoped if I stood still maybe he'd get overcome with decency and back out and go away.

'Mrs. Dunfee gone to telephone for the doctor,' he said, 'or shall I call one?'

He was a plodder all right, that cop, a big dumb plodder. Mr. Dunfee didn't answer and I stood there waiting, breathing through my open mouth so that the cop should hear no noise because if he lifted his eyes he'd see me. I was right in line with him.

'There's a suspicious character around here,' the cop said, after a while, 'and Miss Wilson says she saw him go in here.' The cop's eyes wavered around the room. Then they landed full on mine and I saw him go gray all over. I saw the blood drain out of his face and he looked as if he was going to keel over from

the shock of seeing me standing there in the gloom, silent, open-mouthed, not moving.

I guess I just lost my head. I turned and ran. Four steps to the kitchen door. If that door was locked I'd die. It wasn't. Luck, luck, I had some luck. I tore it open, slammed it shut behind me to give me a little start, and ran down the steps and out across the lawn.

'Stop! Stop!' yelled the cop. I put my head down and ran faster. I ran like a rabbit, going through a hedge so fast I hardly felt it and then he put a bullet into the air over my head. Bam! A big roar of sound driving through the night like a fist.

I stopped short. I was caught now. Breaking and entering.... I didn't steal anything.... What kind of a story would that Wilson dame tell in court? God knows! Would this Dunfee live until the trial and would he say I had just asked him for something to eat? Would he be willing to tell the truth? Had he heard me say anything? What if he should die now?... They'd pin that on me... They'd try to make me responsible... NO!... Breaking and entering, that's what it would be... Dunfee saying, 'He walked in. I didn't notice him say or do anything. I was too sick to pay attention or think about him.'... The cop telling about following me around downtown and me lying to him and running away... Miss Wilson telling how I used all sorts of ruses to get her to open the door and maybe attack her... The Judge saying, 'Ten years'... seventeen years... twenty-five years. On the gang... I'd come off an old man, a convict.

I had turned around and I thought all these things while standing there with my hands up in the air, waiting for the cop. I saw Mr. Jinx running toward me, his hard, tight belly jouncing, his face black with exertion and anger, his gun in his hand. There were heads popping out of the windows all around, lights going up, people leaning out to watch. The meanest crook in the world. That's me. Caught breaking and entering on poor Mr. Dunfee as

he sat dying with asthma. The jury would know about asthma all right.

Then this cop, without saying a word, hit me with the gun right in the face and it felt like all the bones of my face were splintering. I was surprised. I didn't think he was so murderous angry at me. I stood watching him, dazed. I dropped my hands. I didn't feel the blood on my face, but I felt a big drop of it splashing down on the back of my hand and saw him all right, I saw him plain as he lifted his gun high in the air and brought it down hard on my head.

I don't know. When the luck starts running bad, so help me, I don't know. I drew a young judge. He was trying to get ahead and he wanted to say something the Atlanta papers would pick up.

And the warden had the clipping before him when I got up to the camp. ““The circumstances surrounding your crime,” declared Judge Glover, “are such as to prove that you are without the most elementary human emotions. Yours was the act of a dangerous beast. I had thought it beneath the meanest thief on earth.””

The warden looked at me a long time. I could tell that nothing I would say or do would be right. ‘You try mean stuff up here,’ he said at last, ‘and I'll peel your hide with my fingers. Remember, bub, before you start anything mean, we got seventeen years to work on you.’

## THE WHITE CAMEL<sup>1</sup>

BY EUGENE WRIGHT

**I**T WAS high noon. Nothing moved, nothing stirred. There was no sound. Over the entire wasteland, strewn with sand, ribbed by dunes, dotted with rocks, there was nothing to indicate that life survived; that in all the world there existed the phenomena of green grass, water, and human beings. The only thing visible in the blue sky was the sun. It blazed at the zenith, gaseous and incandescent, searing again the hide of a land suppressed, tremulous with the day, sustained by its memory of the night.

But all was not dead in the land. In a depression of the desert, a depression so slight as to be invisible to a man afoot, grew a small tree. Its trunk was knotted and ribbed. Its branches were thorny. Tiny green leaves, paler than winter plants, grew from the stems of these branches. Blossoms — not larger than a penny, grew among the thorns. They were yellow blossoms, soft and round with brown stamens. About this tree clung the faint, delicate odor of mimosa.

The sun wavered. A spiral of wind appeared momentarily on the horizon. Another, holding a dry weed, swept past the tree and vanished, dropping the weed. The figure under the tree did

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1938, by Harper & Brothers.

not move. It appeared not to breathe. In the ponderous heat of noon it lay with its head up, crossed by a bar of shade, its forefeet under its chest, its great hump in silhouette against a wavering horizon.

It was a large camel — not so large, however, as the dromedaries of the Sudan, where the rank grasses and heavy rains grow beasts out of all proportion to their strength. Neither was he thick of body like the Algerian camels, whose barrel chests and short legs are bred for commerce. His chest was deep and narrow, his hips were slenderer than a man's. There was a great length of bone from shoulder to knee and from knee to hock. Through all that part of Africa known as the Sahara there was no swifter camel, and in all that dry, mountainous region known as the Hoggar, where he was born and raised, there had been none more beautiful to see, more responsive to the pressure of a foot, more resistant to the forced marches, months without water and days without food.

But he was not now so white as during those years when he had worn a copper ring in his nostril and picked his way at sundown among the guy ropes of a Tuareg camp. The herbs of soils other than those of the Hoggar had turned the glistening whiteness of his coat to a deep ivory. There were yellowish streaks along his hocks and there was a shade deepening into ochre from the tufted crest of his head to the curve of his neck. The years too had told, for there were hollows above his eyes and the tendons were visible in his legs. But for all of that — for all his change of color and the marks of advanced age — he was still outstanding and would have been singled from a herd and ridden without a whip by a great chief.

All through the burning heat of mid-day he rested, adjusting his position as the hours passed to the retreating shade; and when at length the gray focus of the tree was too small for comfort his eyes opened. His hind quarters came up, one foreleg slapped the

earth. A moment later, risen to his full height, he was sniffing among the under branches for a blossom. But there were none; he had eaten all those underneath before lying down. He made the circuit of the tree, standing on his hind legs and nibbling blossoms from the top; then, bothered by the thorns, he dropped to all fours and wandered on, lowering his head occasionally to seize and tear from its stalk a spray of herb; standing motionless, chewing and sniffing the air which told him all he knew, and all he wanted to know.

At the borders of that part of the Sahara that is known as the Tanzerouft, or Land Without Water, the Captain Hilaire Djon, Commander of the Hoggar, was riding with his guide at the head of a company of meharistes. There had been trouble in the north. The Ouled Gerir, it was reported, had attacked a village in Algeria; they were well armed, many in number, and, it was believed, were swinging in a southeasterly direction across the desert to make a raid on the great herds of Tuareg camels at pasturage in the Sudan.

It was not likely, the Captain thought, that they would actually accomplish this. The month was August, the heat made it almost impossible for burdened camels to travel more than eight days without water. Moreover, in that vast bowl of desert which they should have to cross there was at this season of the year the danger of dust storms. Many a caravan and convoy had perished in these storms, worse by far than the blown sand since they sometimes remained over the desert for weeks, obscuring all landmarks, the moon and stars by night and even the sun by day. But he had not been '*en tournée*,' as he expressed it, for some time; he felt a certain obligation toward the Tuaregs, and for these reasons he had left his large cool chambers at the fort and started southward toward a certain well in the Tanzerouft where, he believed, he might intercept the marauders.

He was a large, portly man, red-cheeked, self-possessed, with bronzed, well-kept hands, with a firm, full mouth, youthful eyes. Erect in the saddle, his helmet covered with a black sun cloth, he played the endless fascinating game of trying to discover novelty in horizons that repeated themselves.

Suddenly he halted. He drew forward a peak of his black turban, held it for a moment, then took his binoculars from their case at the saddle horn. Following a prolonged observation he passed them without comment to his guide.

‘You say?’ he asked.

The guide, an Arab whose shaved head showed through the coils of his turban, lowered the glasses for another look with his naked eyes.

‘Camel,’ he said.

‘He is mounted?’

The Arab decisively shook his finger. ‘No.’

For a moment the Captain held his crisp underlip against his mustache. He could not account for a camel in that part of the Tanzerouft. There was no pasturage to speak of; there was no water. For almost a thousand miles in any direction except north the military maps showed a complete blank, traced by the verticals of longitude and the parallels of latitude. Moreover, he reflected, it was the first time in his life that he had seen a single camel — a camel alone in the desert. One saw herds, occasionally two or three. But never one. Receiving the binoculars from his guide, he again put them to his eyes, sweeping the landscape to left and right of where the animal had been sighted, finally bringing them to focus on the camel itself. Through the powerful lenses it appeared as a white triangle mysteriously floating in waves of heat.

‘He’s come closer!’ he said.

The Arab made a noise with his tongue. ‘Big,’ he exclaimed. ‘Like a giraffe!’

Captain Djon slowly returned his glasses to their case. There were, he remembered, rumors of a solitary camel at large in the Tanzerouft — a camel declared definitely to have been the personal mount of Moussa, the Tuareg chieftain who fifteen years previous had retreated before him into the Tanzerouft, been caught in a dust storm, and perished with his entire company, of thirst. He had even talked to Tuaregs, he remembered, who swore that they had seen the animal — that it had come up to their caravans out of the desert — and had identified it positively as Moussa's camel by the fact that it bore no brand. There was even a legend, the Captain recalled, to the effect that the camel, unable to understand death, was still looking for Moussa, having yet found no one whom it could recognize as a greater master.

The Captain had often smiled at this story, ignoring the challenge. It recalled and perpetuated a conquest that he liked to remember. And he had as often dismissed this story. But now, seeing with his own eyes a camel that he could not otherwise account for, a camel whose size alone quickened the pulse of his heart and seemed to lend credence to the tale, a sudden surge of pride led him to believe that it was worth investigating. He glanced at the sun, reflecting upon the duty that had brought him to the Tanzerouft, the distance yet to go before he reached the well. A few hours' delay, he decided, would not matter. The pasturage at hand was as good as he could expect to find by sundown. He turned in the saddle, giving the signal to dismount; and an hour later, with more emotion than he would have believed possible under such circumstances, was trying desperately to verify with his own eyes what appeared to be almost conclusive.

For of its own accord the big camel had come up to the company, and now with deceptive slowness was picking its way among the outermost of his own camels, all of which had ceased feeding and raised their heads to gaze at the majestic creature so mysteriously in their midst.

Captain Djon followed the animal's every motion. He could not remember when he had seen such grace, such perfect self-possession. The camel walked like a prince, its head high above the level of its hump. Its approach was an inquiring one — but in no way demanding or inquisitive — and certainly, the Captain told himself, without fear. It was no wonder, he reflected, that the Tuareg chieftains refused to brand such animals. Their appearance alone was sufficient identification. He glanced at his men. They were at their stations, patiently waiting, each with a piece of rope behind his back.

Twilight came. The sky crimsoned; there were flaming red pennants over the entire desert. The sun, like a great traffic light, hovered on the horizon, then dropped out of sight. In the gathering darkness the camel was like a white phantom, circling, seeking a wind, a breath of air. He stopped, moved a step forward, stopped again. Then suddenly there was a bellow. There was a scuffle, followed on all sides by the rustle of garments, the shouts of the Arab soldiers; and as the Captain hurried toward the scene of the capture there was a cry that brought something like a human fist rising into his throat. For he knew now that he had caught Moussa's camel, and a nervous, hurried inspection with his flashlight proved that it was true. The beast had no brand. The copper ring had been torn from its nostril.

For a long time the Captain stood in front of the camel, his flashlight making a small lucid pool on the earth at his feet. He knew now how Moussa had died. He could vision the huge blue-clad figure on the ground, crawling, then, for a time motionless, the nose-cord tied to his wrist. He could see the camel scenting its dead master, frightened by the odor of death, then stamping backward, flinging its head and tearing the ring from its nose.

The Captain motioned the Arabs to draw down its head that he might inspect the nostril, but the animal filled its lungs, spaced its feet, and gave a bellow, muffled by the tight halters, that

swelled its neck. He reached up his hand and the camel lifted its head. Abruptly he switched off the light and turned back to the camp.

‘Bring him in,’ he said.

He was thoughtful that night. Long after the baggage camels had been brought in and were filling the air with their ruminations, long after the furious jabbering of his men had died down to an occasional murmur, he lay with his head propped against his saddle bags, watching the great form which would not kneel, which refused to rest, which drew taut now one and now another of the tethers leading from mounds of baggage, which breathed audibly, with a powerful restlessness, its head moving high against the stars.

He remembered very clearly the circumstances that had led up to Moussa’s death and, he reflected, brought him the camel. He remembered his own marriage — the great prestige that it had brought him, a young lieutenant, to be linked with an important and highly influential French military family — and the coveted appointment in the Sahara that he had managed as a result of it. He remembered his arrival at the Hoggar, the Arab fantasia that had welcomed him, and his chagrin upon discovering that Moussa, the chief of the Tuaregs whom he had come to govern, was not there to meet him. And he remembered sending an envoy into the Hoggar, officially demanding Moussa’s presence at a conference, and the subsequent meeting at which he was given clearly to understand by the majestic veiled figure that he had to do with a man who considered himself in every way his equal — if not his superior; that his personal sovereignty and pride of race were stronger than French bullets; that, as a man, he was unconquerable.

And for over three years, the Captain remembered, they had opposed each other, neither yielding an inch; both aware of their responsibilities, the extent to which they could maintain their

positions without an actual resort to arms — a dénouement, the Captain confessed, that he had almost prayed for, confident of victory, well aware that behind him stood the resources of France — men, guns, and ammunition without end.

And at last his opportunity had come. The Senussi, fanatical Mohammedans from Tripoli, were coming across the border. Moussa, a Mohammedan, was doing nothing to stop them; was in fact receiving them. While the Captain's dispatches to this effect were en route to the north a wireless from Algiers had ordered him to repulse the Senussi, disarm the Tuaregs, and place the Hoggar under a military dictatorship.

Captain Djon drew a breath. He put his hand to his large, smooth-shaved cheek. Well, he had done so. And he had done so without loss of life — except to the Senussi. For in his mind's eye he could see the long line of white camels, bearing armed Tuaregs, that had met him at the foothills of the Hoggar, threatening his advance, moving across his line of march toward the Tanzerouft, and his own flanking movement to head them off, bottle them up in the hills. Then his pursuit — a pursuit that ended at the edge of the Tanzerouft itself, and the dust storm that for an entire week had left the Hoggar like an island in a sea of mist.

The Captain got up. He lighted a cigarette and for a time he paced back and forth in front of the camel, under the bright stars. There was no doubt, he thought, that the animal had been searching for Moussa. These camels were notoriously proud, would suffer themselves to be beaten to death, almost, rather than obey a rider whom they did not respect. And there was no questioning the fact that since Moussa's death the Hoggar had failed to produce a man of equal stature.

Captain Djon tossed away his cigarette. He put his hands flat against his chest and stood in front of the big camel, wondering how long it would be before he could ride it, assume possession of

a trophy that had been so long denied him. Not long, he thought. Its nose had yet to heal where it had been pierced for a new ring. A week or more under a heavy pack saddle would thin down the withers enough to take the riding saddle. He recalled the Tuaregs' legend about the animal and pictured himself riding it through the Hoggar, past the Tuareg villages. He imagined situations in which his mastery of the camel would redound to his advantage.

Shortly after midnight, when the company broke camp to begin the day's march, the camel sprang easily to its feet under twelve cases of ammunition and a machine gun.

The Captain was delighted. The last shred of doubt that he might have entertained as to whether the animal recognized him as Moussa's superior was completely dissolved; and as he rode he turned frequently in the saddle to admire his trophy, to reflect upon the irony of its burden, and to congratulate himself that what he had always believed to be true was now apparent, even to his men.

For it was obvious to them, he thought, that the camel had never before borne baggage. It was unthinkable that Moussa should ever have subjected the animal to such indignity, should ever have been forced to do so through necessity. And yet in despite of this fact it marched behind him with its head held high — protesting with a low rumble in its throat, to be sure, when the Arabs laid on the packs and bound them into place; exhibiting its teeth even when brought in hobbled from the pasturage to take its place in the convoy — but, nevertheless, marching proudly behind him, performing superbly in a rôle to which it obviously was unaccustomed.

There were any number of points, the Captain thought, on which the camel seemed to discriminate between himself and his men, and one morning at sunrise, while his men were walking, leading their mounts after the long night march, he thought he would make a test.

‘Up — ride him!’ he said to an Arab close behind him, muttering, telling his prayer beads.

The man started. He gazed at the Captain for a moment as though he had been ordered to shave his beard.

‘Up! On the baggage!’ the Captain prompted. Then, amused by the man’s expression, ‘Speak up!’ he demanded. ‘What’s the trouble?’

The Arab shook his fist. ‘No good!’ he exclaimed. ‘He wants Moussa!’

The Captain laughed. It did not matter. It was gratifying, however, to know the depth of respect that his men had for the camel.

Ten days later, forcing his marches to make up for the time lost, he led his company to the base of a dead dune beyond which, he knew, lay the oasis of Bilma.

He was thoroughly familiar with the place. For a number of years he had regarded it as one of the most strategic points — and one of the best natural defenses — he had ever known. For it lay in the midst of a plain; it was the only water hole within six hundred miles, and thereby commanded all Sahara traffic within that area both north and south, both east and west. Many a time previous, reflecting upon the conflicts that had taken place among the natives over the possession of Bilma, he had figured himself in command of the oasis, his men and machine guns installed in the old well craters surrounding the living spring, watching from this point of vantage the approach of an enemy across the broad plain — an enemy in need of water — an enemy that could go no farther without water, an enemy advancing toward the well craters over the carcasses of camels, between those myriad brown mounds which were the solidified contents of their stomachs.

He would have them there, he thought. He would have them in a trap from which there was no escape; and as a general he

would give them their choice of two deaths: the withering fire of his machine guns or death by thirst.

It was this plan of campaign that brought a glow of satisfaction to the Captain's eyes as he ascended the dune in advance of his company, and that caused him, now that he had taken the trouble to come down to Bilma, to hope fervently that the Ouled Gerir had carried out their plan to attack the Tuaregs and that within a few days — possibly a week — he would be able to execute his program.

Suddenly he felt his arm grasped, his camel halted. His guide had leaped to the ground, was drawing both mounts back under cover of the dune. He had had a quick glance at the oasis; he had thought for a moment that the well was occupied by Tuaregs. But now, creeping forward on his belly, raising his head slowly again above the crest of the dune, he beheld a sight that struck him like a blow, that caused his heart almost to cease beating.

For the white camels hobbled at the well *were* Tuareg camels — there was no doubt about that; but the figures in their midst were Ouled Gerir. They had made their raid, they had sacked the Tuareg villages. They were in possession of the well — and now, stripped to the waist, were watering their mounts for the long trek back across the Tanzerouft and home.

For a long time the Captain lay under the dune's crest, staring at his camels, at his men, but hardly seeing them. He had never before been caught at such a disadvantage. He was in a position in which all his life he had never imagined himself, never believed possible. For he could not go back: his camels could travel another two days without water perhaps, but no more — no, not even with their baggage removed. An attack — even with machine guns — would be suicidal; they could not possibly hope to destroy so many men so perfectly defended. And to wait — to lie hidden behind the dune until the enemy moved on — would be inevitably to invite discovery... and the same choice of

deaths he had planned for the enemy. There was only one way out of the situation: he must gain the well by strategy. He must in some way contrive to spring a trap that he, himself, had regarded as absolutely fool-proof.

With his guide beside him he gazed again at the oasis, counted the Ouled Gerir through his field glasses, found that there were forty-three — a few more even than he had anticipated. He looked at the white Tuareg camels, and suddenly the desire that had brought the Ouled Gerir across two thousand miles of desert in the summertime flowered in his mind, and he recalled his own emotions upon seeing clearly for the first time through his glasses the great white camel, now standing behind him, burdened with baggage. The plan in his mind was a brilliant one, a fantastic one. But would it work? Would the camel obey him? Was it faster than the young camels — the fastest of the young white camels hobbled at the well? He didn't know. He thought so. He hoped so.

He went swiftly to the big camel, thrust his hand under the baggage above the withers, feeling the depression caused by the heavy blades of the pack saddle.

‘Saddle him,’ he said.

His men did not move.

‘Saddle him!’ the Captain repeated; but as a few soldiers moved slowly and uncomprehending to obey the order, his guide stepped forward and his hand went to his temple in a stiff salute.

‘*Mon Commandant*, you must not ride that camel.’

Captain Djon glanced up at the man.

‘It is dangerous,’ the Arab continued. ‘I know that camel well. I have watched him since the day you caught him. *Mon Commandant*, he is still Moussa’s camel.’

The Captain felt his anger rising. He had not expected such a statement from his guide; could not for a moment believe such disloyalty in one of his own men.

'Moussa is dead,' he said bluntly.

'Just the same the camel wants him.'

'He's been carrying baggage,' was the Captain's next retort.

'Good. Let him carry baggage. It makes no difference to him.'

The Arab held himself rigid, his eyes unwavering in a fixed, direct look which told the Captain all that he was afraid to assert in so many words. 'Let him loose and I swear he will return to the Tanzerouft — to exactly the same spot where he came from.'

'You would rather die of thirst?'

'I am not thinking of myself. I am thinking of you. *Mon Commandant*, I know your plan. And I tell you that if you ride the white camel into the Tanzerouft you will not return. There is the little brown camel. He is very swift. I, I am light. With your permission, *Mon Commandant*, I will ride before the Ouled Gerir. I will lead them far, far away. You will have nothing to fear. We shall all be saved.'

'We should die or be killed. They would not follow you.'

The Captain turned to the men who were disburdening the big camel of the cases of ammunition, and as he did so, feeling at that moment every nerve in his large, resolute body, it seemed to him that he was watched by not only his men, but by the eyes of Paris as well, by all those who believed in him, and by those who had envied him and hated him.

'We shall see,' he said, speaking as to himself, and as his light fabric of saddle was fitted forward of the beast's hump he himself underwent a transformation. Removing his sun helmet, he bound his black turban about his face and head, leaving only a narrow aperture for his eyes. One of his soldiers handed him a long blue gown, brocaded, which he slipped over his white tunic. And when he had exposed a tuft of his dark hair and lowered his billowing black pantaloons until they brushed the ground he knew from the look in his men's eyes that his disguise was successful, that mounted on the white camel, he would be mistaken for a Tuareg by the Tuaregs themselves.

There was no need for him to explain his plan. They knew. But he waited until the camels were stripped for action, until every soldier stood at the foreleg of his kneeling mount, a rifle in his hand and bandoliers of cartridges across his chest. Thus they would wait, he told them, until the Ouled Gerir had sighted him, until a sufficient body of them had started in pursuit, until he had led them out of sight into the Tanzerouft.

Then they would strike. They would strike swiftly and decisively. And from the expressions on their tense faces he knew that they would succeed — that they would take possession of the well or die trying.

He took the camel's nose-cord in his hand, and the animal seemed to rise, to grow greater in size. Its knees restlessly moved the sand. He put his foot on its foreleg and its nostrils quivered and its eyes showed white about their yellow irises. Now, he thought, was the moment, not later. Now the camel would snarl, bellow, and refuse to rise or, acknowledging him as its master, it would leap to its feet and race under the pressure of his foot for the plain beyond; and there, even seeing the Tuareg camels and smelling the water it needed, keep on running until he brought it to a halt, saved his men and himself.

He thrust with his foot. The camel rocked under him, flung him forward with a jolt; then with a powerful shudder rose to its full height. It stood stiffly for a moment, its tail out and its head up as if to orient itself. Then, regardless of the Captain's foot or of the nose-cord and of the soft, encouraging words from the Captain's lips, it swung into action — silently, effortlessly, headed for the plain ahead, toward the Tanzerouft beyond.

The chieftain of the Ouled Gerir, Ahmed Ben Salah, was a slim leathern man, not very large, with dark liquid eyes, with a bearded chin, with a knowledge of camel flesh in his small shaved head that was second only to that of the Tuaregs themselves. He had

had no difficulty in crossing the Sahara. Considering the stakes to be gained well worth the sacrifice, he had provided himself with plenty of Algerian camels, mounted those to be ridden by his men with the lightest of saddles, lightly burdened the others with waterskins. At the last well known to him in the Tanzerouft he had allowed these latter camels to drink their fill, then cut out their tongues so that they could not eat. Nine days later, when his waterskins were empty, he had killed these camels and re-provisioned himself with the water in their stomachs. It was in this manner, marching night and day, that he had reached Bilma, made his raid upon the Tuareg villages, and now, with over a hundred white camels, was engaged in selecting from the lot those to be ridden and those to be sacrificed, if need be, on the trip homeward.

He had no fear of the French. As well as anybody — the Tuaregs themselves — he knew the circumstances of Moussa's defeat; realized that were Moussa still alive and in possession of arms, he should not have dared the raid that had been so easy. He smiled, recalling their futile defense with spears and swords; and it was in this frame of mind that his attention was called to a white camel, larger than any he had ever seen, crossing the plain westward ridden by what appeared to be a Tuareg noble.

He immediately suspected a ruse. But what, he reflected, if there were more Tuaregs behind the dune? His men could handle them. He gave orders. More than a dozen saddles were hurriedly fitted to as many white camels. A moment later, in the saddle himself and gripping a rifle, he was directing a flanking movement intended to bring the Tuareg within rifle range.

But the Tuareg, he soon preceived, was making no effort to turn; was riding straight for the Tanzerouft, and his men were beginning to converge from left and right, to fall in with the direct course of pursuit taken by himself. The big camel was getting away from him, racing under the whip; and drawing from his

saddle bag an implement like an iron claw, he applied it savagely to the shoulders of his own mount, raking the flesh, forcing it to greater speed. The glow of satisfaction was now gone from his eyes; they were hard, flashing. He was bent forward in the saddle. Abreast of him were other riders; more were falling in behind. He could not understand the choice of the man ahead of him. Was there a well in the Tanzerouft he did not know? Had the Tuareg sufficient water with him, after all, to manage an escape to the next well under cover of night?

Toward sundown the Captain drew the camel to a halt. It was not easy for him to do so. In spite of its long run, in spite of its faltering and heaviness of foot, it resisted the nose-cord until from sheer force he had drawn back its head, caught its nostril in his hand, and forced it to kneel. It lay heavily upon its chest, its neck outstretched against the sand, the hollows over its eyes rhythmically pulsing.

Captain Djon glanced in the direction from which he had come, and against the clear horizon he could see a number of white dots. He caught a laugh in his throat, then abruptly swallowed it. It was about an hour since the Ouled Gerir had turned. His men had long since taken the well. By midnight, he reflected, the marauders would get the surprise of their lives.

He looked at the camel, and the ache in his arms, the killing fatigue in his back, throughout his entire body was lightened for a moment by a glow of pride, by the elation of conquest. For the camel, he thought, had not only obeyed him; it seemed actually to have understood the situation; for instead of responding to his frequent and finally futile efforts to make it turn, to circle back toward the well in order that he should not be unnecessarily far away when the pursuit ceased, the beast had raced unswervingly toward the Tanzerouft itself — prevented the slightest possibility of his being captured.

He lay down, got up after a moment to drink from his water-skin, then lay down again. He was tired; the camel was tired — completely done up. There was no point in returning to the well immediately. He would sleep for an hour or two, he would allow the camel to rest. By starlight he would return — at a walk, and he would be back at Bilma by dawn.

It was dark when the Captain awoke. It was so dark that for a moment he thought he was blind and put his hands to his face; for he could see no stars, neither could he see the camel. He could hear it breathing, ruminating; he could smell it. But he could not see it.

He got hurriedly to his feet, felt frantically about for his water-skin, found it, and wrapped it carefully in his black turban. He had been a fool, he told himself, to leave it exposed like that, lying on the ground. More than a pint had been drawn since sundown. He located his saddle and brought it quickly to the camel, passing his hands over its hump to locate the withers. There was no point, he told himself, in waiting for daylight. There would be no sun. The dust might continue to fall for a week, two weeks. Saddling up, he removed its hobbles; and with a warning from his heart that he refused to acknowledge, he mounted, brought the animal to its feet and drew the nose-cord, trying to turn it in the direction in which he thought the well should be.

The camel resisted him, caused him to reflect: he had been positive that he knew where the well lay. Immediately upon awakening his instinct had told him. But now that the camel objected he wondered if he were not mistaken. Its sense of direction was infallible. It was thirsty. There was no doubt but that it had smelled the well the day before. The Captain drew his foot from the animal's neck. He allowed the nose-cord to droop. Deliberately, confidently, the beast started through the darkness in a direction contrary to his own; and when the gray light of day

allowed him to see the camel's feet and a pale area of earth he watched this area carefully, hoping for the assurance of a bit of dung dropped by his mount the day before.

But he found no such landmarks, and when toward the middle of the day the heat became almost more than he could bear without his sun-helmet and sufficient clothes to insulate his body, he began to be worried. He had come all, he thought, of thirty kilometers. It was incredible that he could have gone farther the day before. He tried to force the camel more to the right, thinking that he might strike a point of the great plain dotted with camel carcasses and dung. But the camel refused to bear to the right. It turned back its head, showing its teeth and the whites of its eyes, and when he struck it with his whip it instantly collapsed and sprang bellowing to its feet with a suddenness that pitched him out of the saddle.

He quickly recovered himself; he still held the nose-cord. Seizing his whip from the ground, he struck the beast savagely about the head and neck, tried again to force it to the right and, when he found that it would be beaten to death rather than march in that direction, he tried to pull it by the nose-cord, walking barefoot. He fired his rifle, shouted, fired another shot.

He was thoroughly frightened now. His water was gone. In spite of the cloth wrappings all had been absorbed by the heat and the dust. His mouth felt sticky. A kind of panic, worse than thirst, was attacking his nerves. It was imperative, he knew, that he reach Bilma before the next morning. Mounting again, no longer certain of where the well was, he gave the animal its head.

And at sundown of the next day the Captain was still riding. But he was no longer tired. The great heaviness that had been in his body throughout the day was now entirely gone; but it was sluggish in obeying him. His face felt wooden, yet burning. There was a loud ringing in his head. His feet were slipping constantly from the camel's neck. For now that he was blind to the desert

he was as in a room of his own, a room in which the chairs and the tables and all the other objects that he had for so many years used as a means to an end now struck him as new and strange and somehow beautiful, as if they were ends in themselves. And because his mind, now lost, was seeking a truth that was beyond life, he saw again the white camels before him in the Hoggar foot-hills, and he understood at last that the man whom he had most hated had stood always beyond life; that the pride and sovereignty he had so desperately attacked and, he thought, conquered, had been flung in his face; and that he had for fifteen years been wearing the cast-off garments of a man who had died to save the lives of his people. With what was left of his strength he knotted the nose-cord to his wrist and tried, but failed, to bind himself in the saddle.

A strange sight presented itself in the Tanzerouft some days later. In a space of no particular identity stood the white camel. One foreleg, being advanced, was complemented by a hind leg. The other two legs were parallel in a backward position. The attitude, save for the animal's neck, was of motion; yet the beast did not move. It was unable to move. Its neck was bent; its head was turned low to the ground. Its nostril was stretched and from the copper ring in its nostril the nose-cord led backward to a figure brown on top and of a lighter shade underneath, which rested on its knees and chest and one elbow, the other arm being held forward by the nose-cord.

For the space of a half hour the figure did not move. Then, almost imperceptibly, the elbow advanced. One knee drew up behind. The other tried, but failed. And as these efforts were accomplished the camel also moved. Its head advanced slightly. Its feet lifted and lowered in their tracks.

Occasionally the dust became so thick that the camel was invisible, the Captain a dark shadow. There was over the land the

same hush, the same knowledge of falling, fulfillment of will that accompanies a snowstorm.

The Captain moved again; the camel moved. And then for another long period they held their pose — statuesque in a gray mist, bound together yet unconscionably remote, the Captain blind, the camel implacable.

But there came a time in the big camel's life when the Captain ceased to move; when its nostrils quivered and its ears lay back, when with a nervous movement of feet it swung its head over the Captain's body, steadied, and then flung back like a whip, jerking the body and tearing the ring from its nose.

And the camel went on. It traveled by night and during the heat of the day it rested. And before a month had passed the camel arrived at a place in the desert which caused him to wander, as at pasturage; to feed at leisure, moving now in this direction and now in that; to stand for long periods of time chewing what he had eaten and gazing over the landscape.

A tree awakened his interest. It was not a large tree. Its trunk was gray and twisted. Its branches were thorny. Tiny green leaves, paler than winter plants, grew from these branches. Among the leaves were blossoms, not larger than a penny. The camel put his nose familiarly among these blossoms, nibbling, scenting their fragrance. Then, as if moved by a whim, he passed on.

He passed an object like a rock, gray and hairless, crumpled on the earth, cords at either end. He knew it was a waterskin; he had once carried it at his side. But it was without interest.

Likewise without interest was a rifle, its barrel and stock weathered to the whiteness of paper; and, farther on, a blue gown, lying as though dropped only that evening. He came to a leathery figure beyond, colossal, distorted, projecting a few white bones — all that was left of Moussa. There was a nose-cord attached to his wrist, and at the end of the nose-cord there was a copper ring.

The camel smelled the nose-cord and the ring. He lifted his head, gazing over the landscape, scenting the air. This heap of bones was not, to him, the Moussa he had served. He seized a bone in his teeth, transferred it to his molars. For a time he stood over the figure, crunching the bone for its lime. Then, moved by a restless urge, he wandered on, still in search of his master.

## BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR<sup>1</sup>

BY RICHARD WRIGHT

**S**HE stood with her black face some six inches from the moist window-pane and wondered when on earth would it ever stop raining. It might keep up like this all week, she thought. She heard rain droning upon the roof, and high up in the wet sky her eyes followed the silent rush of a bright shaft of yellow that swung from the airplane beacon in far-off Memphis. Momently she could see it cutting through the rainy dark; it would hover a second like a gleaming sword above her head, then vanish. She sighed, troubling, Johnny-Boys been trampin in this slop all day wid no decent shoes on his feet.... Through the window she could see the rich black earth sprawling outside in the night. There was more rain than the clay could soak up; pools stood everywhere. She yawned and mumbled: 'Rains good n bad. It kin make seeds bus up thu the groun, er it kin bog things down lika watah-soaked coffin.' Her hands were folded loosely over her stomach and the hot air of the kitchen traced a filmy veil of sweat on her forehead. From the cookstove came the soft singing of burning wood and now and then a throaty bubble rose from a pot of simmering greens.

'Shucks, Johnny-Boy coulda let somebody else do all tha

runnin in the rain. Theres others bettah fixed fer it than he is. But, naw! Johnny-Boy ain the one t trust nobody t do nothin. Hes gotta do it *all* hisself. . . .

She glanced at a pile of damp clothes in a zinc tub. Waal, Ah bettah git to work. She turned, lifted a smoothing iron with a thick pad of cloth, touched a spit-wet finger to it with a quick, jerking motion: *smiiitz!* Yeah; its hot! Stoopin, she took a blue work-shirt from the tub and shook it out. With a deft twist of her shoulder she caught the iron in her right hand; the fingers of her left hand took a piece of wax from a tin box and a frying sizzle came as she smeared the bottom. She was thinking of nothing now; her hands followed a life-long ritual of toil. Spreading a sleeve, she ran the hot iron to and fro until the wet cloth became stiff. She was deep in the midst of her work when a song rose out of the far off days of her childhood and broke through half-parted lips:

Hes the Lily of the Valley, the Bright n Mawnin Star  
Hes the Fairest of Ten Thousan t mah soul...

A gust of wind dashed rain against the window. Johnny-Boy oughta c mon home n eat his suppah. Aw Lawd! Itd be fine ef Sug could eat wid us tonight! Itd be like ol times! Mabbe aftah all it wont be long fo he'll be back. Tha lettah Ah got from im las week said *Don give up hope.* . . . . Yeah; we gotta live in hope. Then both of her sons, Sug and Johnny-Boy, would be back with her.

With an involuntary nervous gesture, she stopped and stood still, listening. But the only sound was the lulling fall of rain. Shucks, ain no usa me ackin this way, she thought. Ever time they gits ready to hol them meetings Ah gits jumpity. Ah been a lil scared ever since Sug went t jail. She heard the clock ticking and looked. Johnny-Boys a *hour* late! He sho mus be havin a time doin all tha trampin, trampin thu the mud. . . . But her fear was a quiet one; it was more like an intense brooding than a fear;

it was a sort of hugging of hated facts so closely that she could feel their grain, like letting cold water run over her hand from a faucet on a winter morning.

She ironed again, faster now, as if the more she engaged her body in work the less she would think. But how could she forget Johnny-Boy out there on those wet fields rounding up white and black Communists for a meeting tomorrow? And that was just what Sug had been doing when the sheriff had caught him, beat him, and tried to make him tell who and where his comrades were. Po Sug! They sho musta beat tha boy something awful! But, thank Gawd, he didnt talk! He ain no weaklin' Sug ain! Hes been lion-hearted all his life long.

That had happened a year ago. And now each time those meetings came around the old terror surged back. While shoving the iron a cluster of toiling days returned; days of washing and ironing to feed Johnny-Boy and Sug so they could do party work; days of carrying a hundred pounds of white folks' clothes upon her head across fields sometimes wet and sometimes dry. But in those days a hundred pounds was nothing to carry carefully balanced upon her head while stepping by instinct over the corn and cotton rows. The only time it had seemed heavy was when she had heard of Sug's arrest. She had been coming home one morning with a bundle upon her head, her hands swinging idly by her sides, walking slowly with her eyes in front of her, when Bob, Johnny-Boy's pal, had called from across the fields and had come and told her that the sheriff had got Sug. That morning the bundle had become heavier than she could ever remember.

And with each passing week now, though she spoke of it to no one, things were becoming heavier. The tubs of water and the smoothing iron and the bundle of clothes were becoming harder to lift, her with her back aching so, and her work was taking longer, all because Sug was gone and she didn't know just when

Johnny-Boy would be taken too. To ease the ache of anxiety that was swelling her heart, she hummed, then sang softly:

He walks wid me, He talks wid me  
He tells me Ahm His own . . .

Guiltily, she stopped and smiled. Looks like Ah jus cant seem t fergit them ol songs, no mattah how hard Ah tries. . . . She had learned them when she was a little girl living and working on a farm. Every Monday morning from the corn and cotton fields the slow strains had floated from her mother's lips, lonely and haunting; and later, as the years had filled with gall, she had learned their deep meaning. Long hours of scrubbing floors for a few cents a day had taught her who Jesus was, what a great boon it was to cling to Him, to be like Him and suffer without a mumbbling word. She had poured the yearning of her life into the songs, feeling buoyed with a faith beyond this world. The figure of the Man nailed in agony to the Cross, His burial in a cold grave, His transfigured Resurrection, His being breath and clay, God and Man — all had focused her feelings upon an imagery which had swept her life into a wondrous vision.

But as she had grown older, a cold white mountain, the white folks and their laws, had swum into her vision and shattered her songs and their spell of peace. To her that white mountain was temptation, something to lure her from her Lord, a part of the world God had made in order that she might endure it and come through all the stronger, just as Christ had risen with greater glory from the tomb. The days crowded with trouble had enhanced her faith and she had grown to love hardship with a bitter pride; she had obeyed the laws of the white folks with a soft smile of secret knowing.

After her mother had been snatched up to heaven in a chariot of fire, the years had brought her a rough workingman and two black babies, Sug and Johnny-Boy, all three of whom she had wrapped in the charm and magic of her vision. Then she was

tested by no less than God; her man died, a trial which she bore with the strength shed by the grace of her vision; finally even the memory of her man faded into the vision itself, leaving her with two black boys growing tall, slowly into manhood.

Then one day grief had come to her heart when Johnny-Boy and Sug had walked forth demanding their lives. She had sought to fill their eyes with her vision, but they would have none of it. And she had wept when they began to boast of the strength shed by a new and terrible vision.

But she had loved them, even as she loved them now; bleeding, her heart had followed them. She could have done no less, being an old woman in a strange world. And day by day her sons had ripped from her startled eyes her old vision; and image by image had given her a new one, different, but great and strong enough to fling her into the light of another grace. The wrongs and sufferings of black men had taken the place of Him nailed to the Cross; the meager beginnings of the party had become another Resurrection; and the hate of those who would destroy her new faith had quickened in her a hunger to feel how deeply her strength went.

‘Lawd, Johnny-Boy,’ she would sometimes say, ‘Ah jus wan them white folks t try t make me tell *who* is *in* the party n who *ain!* Ah jus wan em t try, n Ahll show em something they never thought a black woman could have!’

But sometimes like tonight, while lost in the forgetfulness of work, the past and the present would become mixed in her; while toiling under a strange star for a new freedom the old songs would slip from her lips with their beguiling sweetness.

The iron was getting cold. She put more wood into the fire, stood again at the window and watched the yellow blade of light cut through the wet darkness. Johnny-Boy ain here yit. . . . Then, before she was aware of it, she was still, listening for sounds. Under the drone of rain she heard the slosh of feet in mud. Tha

ain Johnny-Boy. She knew his long, heavy footsteps in a million. She heard feet come on the porch. Some woman.... She heard bare knuckles knock three times, then once. Thas some of them comrades! She unbarred the door, cracked it a few inches, and flinched from the cold rush of damp wind.

‘Whos tha?’

‘Its me!’

‘Who?’

‘Me, Reva!’

She flung the door open.

‘Lawd, chile, c mon in!’

She stepped to one side and a thin, blonde-haired white girl ran through the door; as she slid the bolt she heard the girl gasping and shaking her wet clothes. Somethings wrong! Reva wouldna walked a mile t mah house in all this slop fer nothin! Tha gals stuck onto Johnny-Boy; Ah wondah ef anything happened t im?

‘Git on inter the kitchen, Reva, where its warm.’

‘Lawd, Ah sho is wet!’

‘How yuh reckon yuhd be, in all tha rain?’

‘Johnny-Boy ain here *yit?*’ asked Reva.

‘Naw! N ain no usa yuh worryin bout im. Jus yuh git them shoes off! Yuh wanna ketch yo deatha col?’ She stood looking absently. Yeah; its something bout the party er Johnny-Boy thas gone wrong. Lawd, Ah wondah ef her pa knows how she feels bout Johnny-Boy? ‘Honey, yuh hadnt oughta come out in sloppy weather like this.’

‘Ah had t come, An Sue.’

She led Reva to the kitchen.

‘Git them shoes off n git close t the stove so yuh’ll git dry!’

‘An Sue, Ah got something to tell yuh...’

The words made her hold her breath. Ah bet its something bout Johnny-Boy!

‘Whut, honey?’

‘The sheriff wuz by our house tonight. He come see pa.’

‘Yeah?’

‘He done got word from somewheres bout tha meetin tomorrow.’

‘Is it Johnny-Boy, Reva?’

‘Aw, naw, An Sue! Ah ain hearda word bout im. Ain yuh seen im tonight?’

‘He ain come home t eat yit.’

‘Where kin he be?’

‘Lawd knows, chile.’

‘Somebodys gotta tell them comrades tha meetings off,’ said Reva. ‘The sheriffs got men watchin our house. Ah had t slip out t git here widout em followin me.’

‘Reva?’

‘Hunh?’

‘Ahma ol woman n Ah wans yuh t tell me the truth.’

‘Whut, An Sue?’

‘Yuh ain tryin t fool me, is yuh?’

‘*Fool* yuh?’

‘Bout Johnny-Boy?’

‘Lawd, naw, An Sue!’

‘Ef theres anything wrong jus tell me, chile. Ah kin stan it.’

She stood by the ironing board, her hands as usual folded loosely over her stomach, watching Reva pull off her water-clogged shoes. She was feeling that Johnny-Boy was already lost to her; she was feeling the pain that would come when she knew it for certain; and she was feeling that she would have to be brave and bear it. She was like a person caught in a swift current of water and knew where the water was sweeping her and did not want to go on but had to go on to the end.

‘It ain nothin bout Johnny-Boy, An Sue,’ said Reva. ‘But we gotta do something er we’ll all git inter trouble.’

'How the sheriff know bout tha meetin?'

'Thas whut pa wans t know.'

'Somebody done turned Judas.'

'Sho looks like it.'

'Ah bet it wuz some of them new ones,' she said.

'Its hard t tell,' said Reva.

'Lissen, Reva, yuh oughta stay here n git dry, but yuh bettah git back n tell yo pa Johnny-Boy ain here n Ah don know when hes gonna show up. *Somebodys* gotta tell them comrades t stay erway from yo pa's house.'

She stood with her back to the window, looking at Reva's wide, blue eyes. Po critter! Gotta go back thu all tha slop! Though she felt sorry for Reva, not once did she think that it would not have to be done. Being a woman, Reva was not suspect; she would have to go. It was just as natural for Reva to go back through the cold rain as it was for her to iron night and day or for Sug to be in jail. Right now, Johnny-Boy was out there on those dark fields trying to get home. Lawd, don let em git im tonight! In spite of herself her feelings became torn. She loved her son and, loving him, she loved what he was trying to do. Johnny-Boy was happiest when he was working for the party, and her love for him was for his happiness. She frowned, trying hard to fit something together in her feelings: for her to try to stop Johnny-Boy was to admit that all the toil of years meant nothing; and to let him go meant that sometime or other he would be caught, like Sug. In facing it this way she felt a little stunned, as though she had come suddenly upon a blank wall in the dark. But outside in the rain were people, white and black, whom she had known all her life. Those people depended upon Johnny-Boy, loved him and looked to him as a man and leader. Yeah; hes gotta keep on; he cant stop now.... She looked at Reva; she was crying and pulling her shoes back on with reluctant fingers.

'Whut yuh carryin on tha way fer, chile?'

‘Yuh done los Sug, now yuh sendin Johnny-Boy...’

‘Ah got t, honey.’

She was glad she could say that. Reva believed in black folks and not for anything in the world would she falter before her. In Reva’s trust and acceptance of her she had found her first feelings of humanity; Reva’s love was her refuge from shame and degradation. If in the early days of her life the white mountain had driven her back from the earth, then in her last days Reva’s love was drawing her toward it, like the beacon that swung through the night outside. She heard Reva sobbing.

‘Hush, honey!’

‘Mah brothers in jail too! Ma cries ever day...’

‘Ah know, honey.’

She helped Reva with her coat; her fingers felt the scant flesh of the girl’s shoulders. She don git ernuff t eat, she thought. She slipped her arms around Reva’s waist and held her close for a moment.

‘Now, yuh stop tha cryin.’

‘A-a-ah c-c-cant hep it....’

‘Everythingll be awright; Johnny-Boyll be back.’

‘Yuh think so?’

‘Sho, chile. Cos he will.’

Neither of them spoke again until they stood in the doorway. Outside they could hear water washing through the ruts of the street.

‘Be sho n send Johnny-Boy t tell the folks t stay erway from pas house,’ said Reva.

‘Ahll tell im. Don yuh worry.’

‘Good-bye!’

‘Good-bye!’

Leaning against the door jamb, she shook her head slowly and watched Reva vanish through the falling rain.

## II

She was back at her board, ironing, when she heard feet sucking in the mud of the back yard; feet she knew from long years of listening were Johnny-Boy's. But tonight with all the rain and fear his coming was like a leaving, was almost more than she could bear. Tears welled to her eyes and she blinked them away. She felt that he was coming so that she could give him up; to see him now was to say good-bye. But it was a good-bye she knew she could never say; they were not that way toward each other. All day long they could sit in the same room and not speak; she was his mother and he was her son; most of the time a nod or a grunt would carry all the meaning that she wanted to say to him, or he to her.

She did not even turn her head when she heard him come stomping into the kitchen. She heard him pull up a chair, sit, sigh, and draw off his muddy shoes; they fell to the floor with heavy thuds. Soon the kitchen was full of the scent of his drying socks and his burning pipe. Tha boys hongry! She paused and looked at him over her shoulder; he was puffing at his pipe with his head tilted back and his feet propped up on the edge of the stove; his eyelids drooped and his wet clothes steamed from the heat of the fire. Lawd, tha boy gits mo like his pa ever day he lives, she mused, her lips breaking in a faint smile. Hols tha pipe in his mouth jus like his pa usta hol his. Wondah how they woulda got erlong ef his pa hada lived? They oughta liked each other, they so mucha like. She wished there could have been other children besides Sug, so Johnny-Boy would not have to be so much alone. A man needs a woman by his side. . . . She thought of Reva; she liked Reva; the brightest glow her heart had ever known was when she had learned that Reva loved Johnny-Boy. But beyond Reva were cold white faces. Ef theys caught it means *death*. . . . She jerked around when she heard Johnny-Boy's pipe clatter to the floor. She saw him pick it up, smile sheepishly at her, and wag his head.

‘Gawd, Ahm sleepy,’ he mumbled.

She got a pillow from her room and gave it to him.

‘Here,’ she said.

‘Hunh,’ he said, putting the pillow between his head and the back of the chair.

They were silent again. Yes, she would have to tell him to go back out into the cold rain and slop; maybe to get caught; maybe for the last time; she didn’t know. But she would let him eat and get dry before telling him that the sheriff knew of the meeting to be held at Lem’s tomorrow. And she would make him take a big dose of soda before he went out; soda always helped to stave off a cold. She looked at the clock. It was eleven. Theres time yit. Spreading a newspaper on the apron of the stove, she placed a heaping plate of greens upon it, a knife, a fork, a cup of coffee, a slab of cornbread, and a dish of peach cobbler.

‘Yo suppahs ready,’ she said.

‘Yeah,’ he said.

He did not move. She ironed again. Presently, she heard him eating. When she could no longer hear his knife tinkling against the edge of the plate, she knew he was through. It was almost twelve now. She would let him rest a little while longer before she told him. Till one er’clock, mabbe. Hes so tired. . . . She finished her ironing, put away the board, and stacked the clothes in her dresser drawer. She poured herself a cup of coffee, drew up a chair, sat, and drank.

‘Yuh almos dry,’ she said, not looking around.

‘Yeah,’ he said, turning sharply to her.

The tone of voice in which she had spoken let him know that more was coming. She drained her cup and waited a moment longer.

‘Reva wuz here.’

‘Yeah?’

‘She lef bout a hour ergo.’

'Whut she say?'

'She said ol man Lem hada visit from the sheriff today.'

'Bout the meetin?'

'Yeah.'

She saw him stare at the coals glowing red through the crevices of the stove and run his fingers nervously through his hair. She knew he was wondering how the sheriff had found out. In the silence he would ask a wordless question and in the silence she would answer wordlessly. Johnny-Boys too trustin, she thought. Hes tryin t make the party big n hes takin in folks fastern he kin git t know em. You cant trust ever white man yuh meet....

'Yuh know, Johnny-Boy, yuh been takin in a lotta them white folks lately...'

'Aw, ma!'

'But, Johnny-Boy...'

'Please, don talk t me bout tha now, ma.'

'Yuh ain t ol t lissen n learn, son,' she said.

'Ah know whut yuh gonna say, ma. N yuh wrong. Yuh cant judge folks jus by how yuh feel bout em n by how long yuh done knowed em. Ef we start tha we wouldnt have *nobody* in the party. When folks pledge they word t be with us, then we gotta take em in. Wes too weak t be choosy.'

He rose abruptly, rammed his hands into his pockets, and stood facing the window; she looked at his back in a long silence. She knew his faith; it was deep. He had always said that black men could not fight the rich bosses alone; a man could not fight with every hand against him. But he believes so hard hes blind, she thought. At odd times they had had these arguments before; always she would be pitting her feelings against the hard necessity of his thinking, and always she would lose. She shook her head. Po Johnny-Boy; he don know...

'But ain nona our folks tol, Johnny-Boy,' she said.

'How yuh know?' he asked. His voice came low and with a

tinge of anger. He still faced the window and now and then the yellow blade of light flicked across the sharp outline of his black face.

‘Cause Ah know em,’ she said.

‘Anybody mighta tol,’ he said.

‘It wuznt nona *our* folks,’ she said again.

She saw his hand sweep in a swift arc of disgust.

‘*Our* folks! Ma, who in Gawds name is *our* folks?’

‘The folks we wuz born n raised wid, son. The folks we *know!*’

‘We cant make the party grow tha way, ma.’

‘It mighta been Booker,’ she said.

‘Yuh don know.’

‘... er Blattberg...’

‘Fer Chrissakes!’

‘... er any of the fo-five others whut joined las week.’

‘Ma, yuh jus don wan me t go out tonight,’ he said.

‘Yo ol ma wans yuh t be careful, son.’

‘Ma, when yuh start doubtin folks in the party, then there ain no end.’

‘Son, Ah knows ever black man n woman in this parta the county,’ she said, standing too. ‘Ah watched em grow up; Ah even heped birth n nurse some of em; Ah knows em *all* from way back. There ain none of em tha *coulda* tol! The folks Ah know jus don open they dos n ast death t walk in! Son, it wuz some of them white folks! Yuh jus mark mah word!’

‘Why is it gotta be *white* folks?’ he asked. ‘Ef they tol, then theys jus Judases, thas all.’

‘Son, look at whuts befo yuh.’

He shook his head and sighed.

‘Ma, Ah done tol yuh a hundred times Ah cant see white n Ah cant see black,’ he said. ‘Ah sees rich men n Ah sees po men.’

She picked up his dirty dishes and piled them in a pan. Out of the corners of her eyes she saw him sit and pull on his wet shoes.

Hes goin! When she put the last dish away he was standing fully dressed, warming his hands over the stove. Just a few mo minutes now n he'll be gone, like Sug, mabbe. Her throat swelled. This black mans fight takes *everthing!* Looks like Gawd puts us in this worl jus t beat us down!

'Keep this, ma,' he said.

She saw a crumpled wad of money in his outstretched fingers.

'Naw; yuh keep it. Yuh might need it.'

'It ain mine, ma. It berlongs t the party.'

'But, Johnny-Boy, yuh might hafta go erway!'

'Ah kin make out.'

'Don fergit yosef too much, son.'

'Ef Ah don come back theyll need it.'

He was looking at her face and she was looking at the money.

'Yuh keep tha,' she said slowly. 'Ahll give em the money.'

'From where?'

'Ah got some.'

'Where yuh git it from?'

She sighed.

'Ah been savin a dollah a week fer Sug ever since hes been in jail.'

'Lawd, ma!'

She saw the look of puzzled love and wonder in his eyes. Clumsily, he put the money back into his pocket.

'Ahm gone,' he said.

'Here; drink this glass of soda watah.'

She watched him drink, then put the glass away.

'Waal,' he said.

'Take the stuff outta yo pockets!'

She lifted the lid of the stove and he dumped all the papers from his pocket into the hole. She followed him to the door and made him turn round.

'Lawd, yuh tryin to maka revolution n yuh cant even keep yo

coat buttoned.' Her nimble fingers fastened his collar high around his throat. 'There!'

He pulled the brim of his hat low over his eyes. She opened the door and with the suddenness of the cold gust of wind that struck her face, he was gone. She watched the black fields and the rain take him, her eyes burning. When the last faint footstep could no longer be heard, she closed the door, went to her bed, lay down, and pulled the cover over her while fully dressed. Her feelings coursed with the rhythm of the rain: Hes gone! Lawd, Ah *know* hes gone! Her blood felt cold.

### III

She was floating in a gray void somewhere between sleeping and dreaming and then suddenly she was wide awake, hearing and feeling in the same instant the thunder of the door crashing in and a cold wind filling the room. It was pitch black and she stared, resting on her elbows, her mouth open, not breathing, her ears full of the sound of tramping feet and booming voices. She knew at once: They lookin fer im! Then, filled with her will, she was on her feet, rigid, waiting, listening.

'The lamps burnin!'

'Yuh see her?'

'Naw!'

'Look in the kitchen!'

'Gee, this place smells like niggers!'

'Say, somebodys here er been here!'

'Yeah; theres fire in the stove!'

'Mabbe hes been here n gone?'

'Boy, look at these jars of jam!'

'Niggers make good jam!'

'Git some bread!'

'Heres some cornbread!'

'Say, lemme git some!'

'Take it easy! Theres plenty here!'  
'Ahma take some of this stuff home!'  
'Look, heres a pota greens!'  
'N some hot cawfee!'  
'Say, yuh guys! C mon! Cut it out! We didnt come here fer a feas!'

She walked slowly down the hall. They lookin fer im, but they ain got im yit! She stopped in the doorway, her gnarled, black hands as always folded over her stomach, but tight now, so tightly the veins bulged. The kitchen was crowded with white men in glistening raincoats. Though the lamp burned, their flashlights still glowed in red fists. Across her floor she saw the muddy tracks of their boots.

'Yuh white folks git outta mah house!'

There was quick silence; every face turned toward her. She saw a sudden movement, but did not know what it meant until something hot and wet slammed her squarely in the face. She gasped, but did not move. Calmly, she wiped the warm, greasy liquor of greens from her eyes with her left hand. One of the white men had thrown a handful of greens out of the pot at her.

'How they taste, ol bitch?'

'Ah ast yuh t git outta mah house!'

She saw the sheriff detach himself from the crowd and walk toward her.

'Now, Anty ...'

'White man, don yuh *Anty* me!'

'Yuh ain got the right sperit!'

'Sperit hell! Yuh git these men outta mah house!'

'Yuh ack like yuh don like it!'

'Naw, Ah don like it, n yuh knows dam waal Ah don!'

'Whut yuh gonna do about it?'

'Ahm tellin yuh t git outta mah house!'

'Gittin sassy?'

'Ef tellin yuh t git outta mah house is sass, then Ahm sassy!'

Her words came in a tense whisper; but beyond, back of them, she was watching, thinking, and judging the men.

'Listen, Anty,' the sheriff's voice came soft and low. 'Ahm here t hep yuh. How come yuh wanna ack this way?'

'Yuh ain never heped yo *own* sef since yuh been born,' she flared. 'How kin the likes of yuh hep me?'

One of the white men came forward and stood directly in front of her.

'Lissen, nigger woman, yuh talkin t *white* men!'

'Ah don care who Ahm talkin t!'

'Yuhll wish some day yuh did!'

'Not t the likes of yuh!'

'Yuh need somebody t teach yuh how t be a good nigger!'

'*Yuh* cant teach it t me!'

'Yuh gonna change yo tune.'

'Not longs mah bloods warm!'

'Don git smart now!'

'Yuh git outta mah house!'

'Spose we don go?' the sheriff asked.

They were crowded around her. She had not moved since she had taken her place in the doorway. She was thinking only of Johnny-Boy as she stood there giving and taking words; and she knew that they, too, were thinking of Johnny-Boy. She knew they wanted him, and her heart was daring them to take him from her.

'Spose we don go?' the sheriff asked again.

'Twenty of yuh runnin over one ol woman! Now, ain yuh white men glad yuh so brave?'

The sheriff grabbed her arm.

'C mon, now! Yuh done did ernuff sass fer one night. Wheres tha nigger son of yos?'

'Don yuh wished yuh knowed?'

'Yuh wanna git slapped?'

'Ah ain never seen one of yo kind tha wuznt too low fer...'

The sheriff slapped her straight across her face with his open palm. She fell back against a wall and sank to her knees.

'Is tha whut white men do t nigger women?'

She rose slowly and stood again, not even touching the place that ached from his blow, her hands folded over her stomach.

'Ah ain never seen one of yo kind tha wuznt too low fer...'

He slapped her again; she reeled backward several feet and fell on her side.

'Is tha whut we too low t do?'

She stood before him again, dry-eyed, as though she had not been struck. Her lips were numb and her chin was wet with blood.

'Aw, let her go! Its the nigger we wan!' said one.

'Wheres that nigger son of yos?' the sheriff asked.

'Find im,' she said.

'By Gawd, ef we hafta find im we'll kill im!'

'He wont be the only nigger yuh ever killed,' she said.

She was consumed with a bitter pride. There was nothing on this earth, she felt then, that they could not do to her but that she could take. She stood on a narrow plot of ground from which she would die before she was pushed. And then it was, while standing there feeling warm blood seeping down her throat, that she gave up Johnny-Boy, gave him up to the white folks. She gave him up because they had come tramping into her heart demanding him, thinking they could get him by beating her, thinking they could scare her into making her tell where he was. She gave him up because she wanted them to know that they could not get what they wanted by bluffing and killing.

'Wheres this meetin gonna be?' the sheriff asked.

'Don yuh wish yuh knowed?'

'Ain there gonna be a meetin?'

'How come yuh astin me?'

'There *is* gonna be a meetin,' said the sheriff.

'Is it?'

'Ah gotta great mind t choke it outta yuh!'

'Yuh so smart,' she said.

'We ain playin wid yuh!'

'Did Ah say yuh wuz?'

'Tha nigger son of yos is erroun here somewherees n we aim t find im,' said the sheriff. 'Ef yuh tell us where he is n ef he talks, mabbe he'll git off easy. But ef we hafta find im, we'll kill im! Ef we hafta find im, then yuh git a sheet t put over im in the mawnin, see? Git yuh a sheet, cause hes gonna be dead!'

'He wont be the only nigger yuh ever killed,' she said again.

The sheriff walked past her. The others followed. Yuh didnt git whut yuh wanted! she thought exultingly. N yuh ain gonna *never* git it! Hotly something ached in her to make them feel the intensity of her pride and freedom; her heart groped to turn the bitter hours of her life into words of a kind that would make them feel that she had taken all they had done to her in her stride and could still take more. Her faith surged so strongly in her she was all but blinded. She walked behind them to the door, knotting and twisting her fingers. She saw them step to the muddy ground. Each whirl of the yellow beacon revealed glimpses of slanting rain. Her lips moved, then she shouted:

'Yuh didn't git whut yuh wanted! N yuh ain gonna nevah git it!'

The sheriff stopped and turned; his voice came low and hard.

'Now, by Gawd, thas ernuff outta yuh!'

'Ah know when Ah done said ernuff!'

'Aw, naw, yuh don!' he said. 'Yuh don know when yuh done said ernuff, but Ahma teach yuh ternight!'

He was up the steps and across the porch with one bound. She backed into the hall, her eyes full on his face.

'Tell me when yuh gonna stop talkin!' he said, swinging his fist. The blow caught her high on the cheek; her eyes went blank; she fell flat on her face. She felt the hard heel of his wet shoes coming into her temple and stomach.

'Lemme hear yuh talk some mo!'

She wanted to, but could not; pain numbed and choked her. She lay still and somewhere out of the gray void of unconsciousness she heard someone say: *Aw fer chrissakes leave her erlone its the nigger we wan....*

#### IV

She never knew how long she had lain huddled in the dark hallway. Her first returning feeling was of a nameless fear crowding the inside of her, then a deep pain spreading from her temple downward over her body. Her ears were filled with the drone of rain and she shuddered from the cold wind blowing through the door. She opened her eyes and at first saw nothing. As if she were imagining it, she knew she was half-lying and half-sitting in a corner against a wall. With difficulty she twisted her neck, and what she saw made her hold her breath — a vast white blur was suspended directly above her. For a moment she could not tell if her fear was from the blur or if the blur was from her fear. Gradually the blur resolved itself into a huge white face that slowly filled her vision. She was stone still, conscious really of the effort to breathe, feeling somehow that she existed only by the mercy of that white face. She had seen it before; its fear had gripped her many times; it had for her the fear of all the white faces she had ever seen in her life. *Sue...* As from a great distance, she heard her name being called. She was regaining consciousness now, but the fear was coming with her. She looked into the face of a white man, wanting to scream out for him to go; yet accepting his presence because she felt she had to. Though some remote part of her mind was active, her limbs were power-

less. It was as if an invisible knife had split her in two, leaving one half of her lying there helpless, while the other half shrank in dread from a forgotten but familiar enemy. *Sue its me Sue its me* . . . Then all at once the voice came clearly.

‘Sue, its me! Its Booker!’

And she heard an answering voice speaking inside of her, Yeah, its Booker . . . The one whut jus joined . . . She roused herself, struggling for full consciousness; and as she did so she transferred to the person of Booker the nameless fear she felt. It seemed that Booker towered above her as a challenge to her right to exist upon the earth.

‘Yuh awright?’

She did not answer; she started violently to her feet and fell.

‘Sue, yuh hurt!’

‘Yeah,’ she breathed.

‘Where they hit yuh?’

‘Its mah head,’ she whispered.

She was speaking even though she did not want to; the fear that had hold of her compelled her.

‘They beat yuh?’

‘Yeah.’

‘Them bastards! Them Gawddam bastards!’

She heard him saying it over and over; then she felt herself being lifted.

‘Naw!’ she gasped.

‘Ahma take yuh t the kitchen!’

‘Put me down!’

‘But yuh cant stay here like this!’

She shrank in his arms and pushed her hands against his body; when she was in the kitchen she freed herself, sank into a chair, and held tightly to its back. She looked wonderingly at Booker; there was nothing about him that should frighten her so; but even that did not ease her tension. She saw him go to the water

bucket, wet his handkerchief, wring it, and offer it to her. Distrustfully, she stared at the damp cloth.

'Here; put this on yo fothead . . .'

'Naw!'

'C mon; itll make yuh feelbettah!'

She hesitated in confusion; what right had she to be afraid when someone was acting as kindly as this toward her? Reluctantly, she leaned forward and pressed the damp cloth to her head. It helped. With each passing minute she was catching hold of herself, yet wondering why she felt as she did.

'Whut happened?'

'Ah don know.'

'Yuh feelbettah?'

'Yeah.'

'Who all wuz here?'

'Ah don know,' she said again.

'Yo head still hurt?'

'Yeah.'

'Gee, Ahm sorry.'

'Ahm awright,' she sighed and buried her face in her hands.

She felt him touch her shoulder.

'Sue, Ah got some bad news fer yuh . . .'

She knew; she stiffened and grew cold. It had happened; she stared dry-eyed with compressed lips.

'Its mah Johnny-Boy,' she said.

'Yeah; Ahm awful sorry t hafta tell yuh this way. But Ah thought yuh oughta know . . .'

Her tension eased and a vacant place opened up inside of her. A voice whispered, Jesus, hep me!

'W-w-where is he?'

'They got im out t Foleys Woods tryin t make im tell who the others is.'

'He ain gonna tell,' she said. 'They just as waal kill im, cause he ain gonna nevah tell.'

'Ah hope he don,' said Booker. 'But he didnt hava chance t tell the others. They grabbed im jus as he got t the woods.'

Then all the horror of it flashed upon her; she saw flung out over the rainy countryside an array of shacks where white and black comrades were sleeping; in the morning they would be rising and going to Lem's; then they would be caught. And that meant terror, prison, and death. The comrades would have to be told; she would have to tell them; she could not entrust Johnny-Boy's work to another, and especially not to Booker as long as she felt toward him as she did. Gripping the bottom of the chair with both hands, she tried to rise; the room blurred and she swayed. She found herself resting in Booker's arms.

'Lemme go!'

'Sue, yuh too weak t walk!'

'Ah gotta tell em!' she said.

'Set down, Sue! Yuh hurt; yuh sick!'

When seated she looked at him helplessly.

'Sue, lissen! Johnny-Boys caught. Ahm here. Yuh tell me who they is n Ahll tell em.'

She stared at the floor and did not answer. Yes; she was too weak to go. There was no way for her to tramp all those miles through the rain tonight. But should she tell Booker? If only she had somebody like Reva to talk to. She did not want to decide alone; she must make no mistake about this. She felt Booker's fingers pressing on her arm and it was as though the white mountain was pushing her to the edge of a sheer height; she again exclaimed inwardly, Jesus, hep me! Booker's white face was at her side, waiting. Would she be doing right to tell him? Suppose she did not tell and then the comrades were caught? She could not ever forgive herself for doing a thing like that. But maybe she was wrong; maybe her fear was what Johnny-Boy had always called 'jus foolishness.' She remembered his saying, Ma we cant make the party ef we start doubtin everybody....

'Tell me who they is, Sue, n Ahll tell em. Ah just joined n Ah don know who they is.'

'Ah don know who they is,' she said.

'Yuh gotta tell me who they is, Sue!'

'Ah tol yuh Ah don know!'

'Yuh *do* know! C mon! Set up n talk!'

'Naw!'

'Yuh wan em all t git *killed?*'

She shook her head and swallowed. Lawd, Ah don blieve in this man!

'Lissen, Ahll call the names n yuh tell me which ones is in the party n which ones ain, see?'

'Naw!'

'Please, Sue!'

'Ah don know,' she said.

'Sue, yuh ain doin right by em. Johnny-Boy wouldnt wan yuh t be this way. Hes out there holdin up his end. Les hol up ours....'

'Lawd, Ah don know....'

'Is yuh scareda me cause Ahm *white?* Johnny-Boy ain like tha. Don let all the work we done go fer nothin.'

She gave up and bowed her head in her hands.

'Is it Johnson? Tell me, Sue?'

'Yeah,' she whispered in horror; a mounting horror of feeling herself being undone.

'Is it Green?'

'Yeah.'

'Murphy?'

'Lawd, Ah don know!'

'Yuh gotta tell me, Sue!'

'Mistah Booker, please leave me erlone....'

'Is it Murphy?'

She answered yes to the names of Johnny-Boy's comrades; she

answered until he asked her no more. Then she thought, How he know the sheriffs men is watchin Lems house? She stood up and held onto her chair, feeling something sure and firm within her.

‘How yuh know bout Lem?’

‘Why . . . How Ah know?’

‘Whut yuh doin here this tima night? How yuh know the sheriff got Johnny-Boy?’

‘Sue, don yuh blieve in me?’

She did not, but she could not answer. She stared at him until her lips hung open; she was searching deep within herself for certainty.

‘You meet Reva?’ she asked.

‘Reva?’

‘Yeah; Lems gal?’

‘Oh, yeah. Sho, Ah met Reva.’

‘She tell yuh?’

She asked the question more of herself than of him; she longed to believe.

‘Yeah,’ he said softly. ‘Ah reckon Ah oughta be goin t tell em now.’

‘Who?’ she asked. ‘Tell *who*?’

The muscles of her body were stiff as she waited for his answer; she felt as though life depended upon it.

‘The comrades,’ he said.

‘Yeah,’ she sighed.

She did not know when he left; she was not looking or listening. She just suddenly saw the room empty, and from her the thing that had made her fearful was gone.

For a space of time that seemed to her as long as she had been upon the earth, she sat huddled over the cold stove. One minute she would say to herself, They both gone now; Johnny-Boy n Sug

... Mabbe Ahll never see em ergin. Then a surge of guilt would blot out her longing. 'Lawd, Ah shouldna tol!' she mumbled. 'But no man kin be so lowdown as t do a thing like tha...' Several times she had an impulse to try to tell the comrades herself; she was feeling a little better now. But what good would that do? She had told Booker the names. He just couldnt be a Judas t po folks like us... He *couldnt!*

'An Sue!'

Thas Reva! Her heart leaped with an anxious gladness. She rose without answering and limped down the dark hallway. Through the open door, against the background of rain, she saw Reva's face lit now and then to whiteness by the whirling beams of the beacon. She was about to call, but a thought checked her. Jesus, hep me! Ah gotta tell her bout Johnny-Boy... Lawd, Ah cant!

'An Sue, yuh there?'

'C mon in, chile!'

She caught Reva and held her close for a moment without speaking.

'Lawd, Ahm sho glad yuh here,' she said at last.

'Ah thought something had happened t yuh,' said Reva, pulling away. 'Ah saw the do open... Pa tol me to come back n stay wid yuh tonight...' Reva paused and stared. 'W-w-whuts the mattah?'

She was so full of having Reva with her that she did not understand what the question meant.

'Hunh?'

'Yo neck...'

'Aw, it ain nothin, chile. C mon in the kitchen.'

'But theres blood on yo neck!'

'The sheriff wuz here...'

'Them fools! Whut they wanna bother yuh fer? Ah could kill em! So hep me Gawd, Ah could!'

'It ain nothin,' she said.

She was wondering how to tell Reva about Johnny-Boy and Booker. Ahll wait a lil while longer, she thought. Now that Reva was here, her fear did not seem as awful as before.

'C mon, lemme fix yo head, An Sue. Yuh hurt.'

They went to the kitchen. She sat silent while Reva dressed her scalp. She was feeling better now; in just a little while she would tell Reva. She felt the girl's finger pressing gently upon her head.

'Tha hurt?'

'A lil, chile.'

'Yuh po thing.'

'It ain nothin.'

'Did Johnny-Boy come?'

She hesitated.

'Yeah.'

'He done gone t tell the others?'

Reva's voice sounded so clear and confident that it mocked her.  
Lawd, Ah cant tell this chile . . .

'Yuh tol im, didnt yuh, An Sue?'

'Y-y-yeah . . .'

'Gee! Thas good! Ah tol pa he didn't hafta worry ef Johnny-Boy got the news. Mabbe thingsll come out awright.'

'Ah hope . . .'

She could not go on; she had gone as far as she could; for the first time that night she began to cry.

'Hush, An Sue! Yuh awways been brave. Itll be awright!'

'Ain nothin awright, chile. The worls just too much fer us, Ah reckon.'

'Ef yuh cry that way itll make me cry.'

She forced herself to stop. Naw; Ah cant carry on this way in fronta Reva . . . Right now she had a deep need for Reva to believe in her. She watched the girl get pine-knots from behind the stove, rekindle the fire, and put on the coffee pot.

'Yuh wan some cawfee?' Reva asked.

'Naw, honey.'

'Aw, c mon, An Sue.'

'Jusa lil, honey.'

'Thas the way t be. Oh, say, Ah fergot,' said Reva, measuring out spoonfuls of coffee. 'Pa tol me t tell yuh t watch out fer tha Booker man. Hes a stool.'

She showed not one sign of outward movement or expression, but as the words fell from Reva's lips she went limp inside.

'Pa tol me soon as Ah got back home. He got word from town...'

She stopped listening. She felt as though she had been slapped to the extreme outer edge of life, into a cold darkness. She knew now what she had felt when she had looked up out of her fog of pain and had seen Booker. It was the image of all the white folks, and the fear that went with them, that she had seen and felt during her lifetime. And again, for the second time that night, something she had felt had come true. All she could say to herself was, Ah didnt like im! Gawd knows, Ah didnt! Ah tol Johnny-Boy it wuz some of them white folks...

'Here; drink yo cawfee...'

She took the cup; her fingers trembled, and the steaming liquid spilt onto her dress and leg.

'Ahm sorry, An Sue!'

Her leg was scalded, but the pain did not bother her.

'Its awright,' she said.

'Wait; lemme put something on tha burn!'

'It don hurt.'

'Yuh worried bout something.'

'Naw, honey.'

'Lemme fix yuh so mo cawfee.'

'Ah don wan nothin now, Reva.'

'Waal, buck up. Don be tha way...'

They were silent. She heard Reva drinking. No; she would not tell Reva; Reva was all she had left. But she had to do something, some way, somehow. She was undone too much as it was; and to tell Reva about Booker or Johnny-Boy was more than she was equal to; it would be too coldly shameful. She wanted to be alone and fight this thing out with herself.

‘Go t bed, honey. Yuh tired.’

‘Naw; Ahm awright, An Sue.’

She heard the bottom of Reva’s empty cup clank against the top of the stove. Ah *got* t make her go t bed! Yes; Booker would tell the names of the comrades to the sheriff. If she could only stop him some way! That was the answer, the point, the star that grew bright in the morning of new hope. Soon, maybe half an hour from now, Booker would reach Foley’s Woods. Hes boun t go the long way, cause he don know no short cut, she thought. Ah could wade the creek n beat im there. . . . But what would she do after that?

‘Reva, honey, go t bed. Ahm awright. Yuh need res.’

‘Ah ain sleepy, An Sue.’

‘Ah knows whuts bes fer yuh, chile. Yuh tired n wet.’

‘Ah wanna stay up wid yuh.’

She forced a smile and said:

‘Ah don think they gonna hurt Johnny-Boy . . .’

‘Fer *real*, An Sue?’

‘Sho, honey.’

‘But Ah wanna wait up wid yuh.’

‘Thas mah job, honey. Thas whut a mas fer, t wait up fer her chullun.’

‘Good night, An Sue.’

‘Good night, honey.’

She watched Reva pull up and leave the kitchen; presently she heard the shucks in the mattress whispering, and she knew that Reva had gone to bed. She was alone. Through the cracks

of the stove she saw the fire dying to grey ashes; the room was growing cold again. The yellow beacon continued to flit past the window and the rain still drummed. Yes; she was alone; she had done this awful thing alone; she must find some way out, alone. Like touching a festering sore, she put her finger upon that moment when she had shouted her defiance to the sheriff, when she had shouted to feel her strength. She had lost Sug to save others; she had let Johnny-Boy go to save others; and then in a moment of weakness that came from too much strength she had lost all. If she had not shouted to the sheriff, she would have been strong enough to have resisted Booker; she would have been able to tell the comrades herself. Something tightened in her as she remembered and understood the fit of fear she had felt on coming to herself in the dark hallway. A part of her life she thought she had done away with forever had had hold of her then. She had thought the soft, warm past was over; she had thought that it did not mean much when now she sang: 'Hes the Lily of the Valley, the Bright n Mawnin Star.' . . . The days when she had sung that song were the days when she had not hoped for anything on this earth, the days when the cold mountain had driven her into the arms of Jesus. She had thought that Sug and Johnny-Boy had taught her to forget Him, to fix her hope upon the fight of black men for freedom. Through the gradual years she had believed and worked with them, had felt strength shed from the grace of their terrible vision. That grace had been upon her when she had let the sheriff slap her down; it had been upon her when she had risen time and again from the floor and faced him. But she had trapped herself with her own hunger; to water the long dry thirst of her faith her pride had made a bargain which her flesh could not keep. Her having told the names of Johnny-Boy's comrades was but an incident in a deeper horror. She stood up and looked at the floor while call and counter-call, loyalty and counter-loyalty struggled in her soul. Mired she was between two

abandoned worlds, living, dying without the strength of the grace that either gave. The clearer she felt it the fuller did something well up from the depths of her for release; the more urgent did she feel the need to fling into her black sky another star, another hope, one more terrible vision to give her the strength to live and act. Softly and restlessly she walked about the kitchen, feeling herself naked against night, the rain, the world; and shamed whenever the thought of Reva's love crossed her mind. She lifted her empty hands and looked at her writhing fingers. Lawd, whut kin Ah do now? She could still wade the creek and get to Foley's Woods before Booker. And then what? How could she manage to see Johnny-Boy or Booker? Again she heard the sheriff's threatening voice: Git yuh a sheet, cause hes gonna be dead! The sheet! Thas it, the sheet! Her whole being leaped with will; the long years of her life bent toward a moment of focus, a point. Ah kin go wid mah sheet! Ahll be doin whut he said! Lawd Gawd in Heaven, Ahma go lika nigger woman wid mah windin sheet t git mah dead son! But then what? She stood straight and smiled grimly; she had in her heart the whole meaning of her life; her entire personality was poised on the brink of a total act. Ah know! Ah know! She thought of Johnny-Boy's gun in the dresser drawer. Ahll hide the gun in the sheet n go aftah Johnny-Boys body. . . . She tiptoed to her room, eased out the dresser drawer, and got a sheet. Reva was sleeping; the darkness was filled with her quiet breathing. She groped in the drawer and found the gun. She wound the gun in the sheet and held them both under her apron. Then she stole to the bedside and watched Reva. Lawd, hep her! But mabbe shesbettah off. This had t happen sometimes . . . She n Johnny-Boy couldna been together in this here South . . . N Ah couldnt tell her bout Booker. Itll come out awright n she wont nevah know. Reva's trust would never be shaken. She caught her breath as the shucks in the mattress rustled dryly; then all was quiet and she breathed easily

again. She tiptoed to the door, down the hall, and stood on the porch. Above her the yellow beacon whirled through the rain. She went over muddy ground, mounted a slope, stopped and looked back at her house. The lamp glowed in her window, and the yellow beacon that swung every few seconds seemed to feed it with light. She turned and started across the fields, holding the gun and sheet tightly, thinking, Po Reva... Po critter... Shes fas ersleep...

## VI

For the most part she walked with her eyes half shut, her lips tightly compressed, leaning her body against the wind and the slanting rain, feeling the pistol in the sheet sagging cold and heavy in her fingers. Already she was getting wet; it seemed that her feet found every puddle of water that stood between the corn rows.

She came to the edge of the creek and paused, wondering at what point was it low. Taking the sheet from under her apron, she wrapped the gun in it so that her finger could be upon the trigger. Ahll cross here, she thought. At first she did not feel the water; her feet were already wet. But the water grew cold as it came up to her knees; she gasped when it reached her waist. Lawd, this creeks high! When she had passed the middle, she knew that she was out of danger. She came out of the water, climbed a grassy hill, walked on, turned a bend and saw the lights of autos gleaming ahead. Yeah; theys still there! She hurried with her head down. Wondah did Ah beat im here? Lawd, Ah hope so! A vivid image of Booker's white face hovered a moment before her eyes and a driving will surged up in her so hard and strong that it vanished. She was among the autos now. From nearby came the hoarse voices of the men.

'Hey, yuh!'

She stopped, nervously clutching the sheet. Two white men with shotguns came toward her.

‘Whut in hell yuh doin out here?’

She did not answer.

‘Didnt yuh hear somebody speak t yuh?’

‘Ahm comin aftah mah son,’ she said humbly.

‘Yo son?’

‘Yessuh.’

‘Whut yo son doin out here?’

‘The sheriffs got im.’

‘Holy Scott! Jim, its the niggers ma!’

‘Whut yuh got there?’ asked one.

‘A sheet.’

‘A *sheet*?’

‘Yessuh.’

‘Fer whut?’

‘The sheriff tol me t bring a sheet t git his body.’

‘Waal, waal . . .’

‘Now, ain tha something?’

The white men looked at each other.

‘These niggers sho love one ernothe,’ said one.

‘N tha ain no lie,’ said the other.

‘Take me t the sheriff,’ she begged.

‘Yuh ain givin us *orders*, is yuh?’

‘Nawsuh.’

‘We’ll take yuh when wes good n ready.’

‘Yessuh.’

‘So yuh wan his body?’

‘Yessuh.’

‘Waal, he ain dead yit.’

‘They gonna kill im,’ she said.

‘Ef he talks they wont.’

‘He ain gonna talk,’ she said.

‘How yuh know?’

‘Cause he ain.’

'We got ways of makin niggers talk.'

'Yuh ain got no way fer im.'

'Yuh thinka lot of tha black Red, don yuh?'

'Hes mah son.'

'Why don yuh teach im some sense?'

'Hes mah son,' she said again.

'Lissen, ol nigger woman, yuh stan there wid yo hair white. Yuh got bettah sense than t believe tha niggers kin make a revolution...'

'A black republic,' said the other one, laughing.

'Take me t the sheriff,' she begged.

'Yuh his ma,' said one. 'Yuh kin make im talk n tell whos in this thing wid im.'

'He ain gonna talk,' she said.

'Don yuh wan im t live?'

She did not answer.

'C mon, les take her t Bradley.'

They grabbed her arms and she clutched hard at the sheet and gun; they led her toward the crowd in the woods. Her feelings were simple; Booker would not tell; she was there with the gun to see to that. The louder became the voices of the men the deeper became her feeling of wanting to right the mistake she had made; of wanting to fight her way back to solid ground. She would stall for time until Booker showed up. Oh, ef theyll only lemme git close t Johnny-Boy! As they led her near the crowd she saw white faces turning and looking at her and heard a rising clamor of voices.

'Whos tha?'

'A nigger woman!'

'Whut she doin out here?'

'This is his ma!' called one of the men.

'Whut she wans?'

'She brought a sheet t cover his body!'

'He ain dead yit!'

'They tryin t make im talk!'

'But he will be dead soon ef he don open up!'

'Say, look! The niggers ma brought a sheet t cover up his body!'

'Now, ain tha sweet?'

'Mabbe she wans t hol a prayer meetin!'

'Did she git a preacher?'

'Say, go git Bradley!'

'O.K.!'

The crowd grew quiet. They looked at her curiously; she felt their cold eyes trying to detect some weakness in her. Humbly, she stood with the sheet covering the gun. She had already accepted all that they could do to her.

The sheriff came.

'So yuh brought yo sheet, hunh?'

'Yessuh,' she whispered.

'Looks like them slaps we gave yuh learned yuh some sense, didnt they?'

She did not answer.

'Yuh don need tha sheet. Yo son ain dead yit,' he said, reaching.

She backed away, her eyes wide.

'Naw!'

'Now, lissen, Anty!' he said. 'There ain no use in yuh ackin a fool! Go in there n tell tha nigger son of yos t tell us whos in this wid im, see? Ah promise we wont kill im ef he talks. We'll let im git outta town.'

'There ain nothin Ah kin tell im,' she said.

'Yuh wan us t kill im?'

She did not answer. She saw someone lean toward the sheriff and whisper.

'Bring her erlong,' the sheriff said.

They led her to a muddy clearing. The rain streamed down through the ghostly glare of the flashlights. As the men formed a semi-circle she saw Johnny-Boy lying in a trough of mud. He was tied with rope; he lay hunched, one side of his face resting in a pool of black water. His eyes were staring questioningly at her.

‘Speak t im,’ said the sheriff.

If she could only tell him why she was there! But that was impossible; she was close to what she wanted and she stared straight before her with compressed lips.

‘Say, nigger!’ called the sheriff, kicking Johnny-Boy. ‘Here’s yo ma!’

Johnny-Boy did not move or speak. The sheriff faced her again.

‘Lissen, Anty,’ he said. ‘Yuh got mo say wid im than anybody. Tell im t talk n hava chance. Whut he wanna perfect the other niggers n white folks fer?’

She slid her finger about the trigger of the gun and looked stonily at the mud.

‘Go t him,’ said the sheriff.

She did not move. Her heart was crying out to answer the amazed question in Johnny-Boy’s eyes. But there was no way now.

‘Waal, yuhre astin fer it. By Gawd, we gotta way to *make* yuh talk t im,’ he said, turning away. ‘Say, Tim, git one of them logs n turn tha nigger upsidedown n put his legs on it!’

A murmur of assent ran through the crowd. She bit her lips; she knew what that meant.

‘Yuh wan yo nigger son crippled?’ she heard the sheriff ask.

She did not answer. She saw them roll the log up; they lifted Johnny-Boy and laid him on his face and stomach, then they pulled his legs over the log. His knee-caps rested on the sheer top of the log’s back, the toes of his shoes pointing groundward. So

absorbed was she in watching that she felt that it was she that was being lifted and made ready for torture.

‘Git a crowbar!’ said the sheriff.

A tall, lank man got a crowbar from a near-by auto and stood over the log. His jaws worked slowly on a wad of tobacco.

‘Now, its up t yuh, Anty,’ the sheriff said. ‘Tell the man whut t do!’

She looked into the rain. The sheriff turned.

‘Mabbe she think wes playin. Ef she don say nothin, then break em at the knee-caps!’

‘O.K., Sheriff!’

She stood waiting for Booker. Her legs felt weak; she wondered if she would be able to wait much longer. Over and over she said to herself, Ef he came now Ahd kill em both!

‘She ain sayin nothin, Sheriff!’

‘Waal, Gawddammit, let im have it!’

The crowbar came down and Johnny-Boy’s body lunged in the mud and water. There was a scream. She swayed, holding tight to the gun and sheet.

‘Hol im! Git the other leg!’

The crowbar fell again. There was another scream.

‘Yuh break em?’ asked the sheriff.

The tall man lifted Johnny-Boy’s legs and let them drop limply again, dropping rearward from the knee-caps. Johnny-Boy’s body lay still. His head had rolled to one side and she could not see his face.

‘Jus lika broke sparrow wing,’ said the man, laughing softly.

Then Johnny-Boy’s face turned to her; he screamed.

‘Go way, ma! Go way!’

It was the first time she had heard his voice since she had come out to the woods; she all but lost control of herself. She started violently forward, but the sheriff’s arm checked her.

'Aw, naw! Yuh had yo chance!' He turned to Johnny-Boy.  
'She kin go ef yuh talk.'

'Mistah, he ain gonna talk,' she said.

'Go way, ma!' said Johnny-Boy.

'Shoot im! Don make im suffah so,' she begged.

'He'll either talk or he'll never hear yuh ergin,' the sheriff said.  
'Theres other things we kin do t im.'

She said nothing.

'Whut yuh come here fer, ma?' Johnny-Boy sobbed.

'Ahm gonna split his eardrums,' the sheriff said. 'Ef yuh got anything t say t im yuhbettah say it *now!*'

She closed her eyes. She heard the sheriff's feet sucking in mud. Ah could save im! She opened her eyes; there were shouts of eagerness from the crowd as it pushed in closer.

'Bus em, Sheriff!'

'Fix im so he cant hear!'

'He knows how t do it, too!'

'He busted a Jew boy tha way once!'

She saw the sheriff stoop over Johnny-Boy, place his flat palm over one ear and strike his fist against it with all his might. He placed his palm over the other ear and struck again. Johnny-Boy moaned, his head rolling from side to side, his eyes showing white amazement in a world without sound.

'Yuh wouldn't talk t im when yuh had the chance,' said the sheriff. 'Try n talk now.'

She felt warm tears on her cheeks. She longed to shoot Johnny-Boy and let him go. But if she did that they would take the gun from her, and Booker would tell who the others were. Lawd, hep me! The men were talking loudly now, as though the main business was over. It seemed ages that she stood there watching Johnny-Boy roll and whimper in his world of silence.

'Say, Sheriff, heres somebody lookin fer yuh!'

'Who is it?'

'Ah don know!'

'Bring em in!'

She stiffened and looked around wildly, holding the gun tight. Is tha Booker? Then she held still, feeling that her excitement might betray her. Mabbe Ah kin shoot em both! Mabbe Ah kin shoot twice! The sheriff stood in front of her, waiting. The crowd parted and she saw Booker hurrying forward.

'Ah know em all, Sheriff!' he called.

He came full into the muddy clearing where Johnny-Boy lay.

'Yuh mean yuh got the names?'

'Sho! The ol nigger...'

She saw his lips hang open and silent when he saw her. She stepped forward and raised the sheet.

'Whut...'

She fired, once; then, without pausing, she turned, hearing them yell. She aimed at Johnny-Boy, but they had their arms around her, bearing her to the ground, clawing at the sheet in her hand. She glimpsed Booker lying sprawled in the mud, on his face, his hands stretched out before him; then a cluster of yelling men blotted him out. She lay without struggling, looking upward through the rain at the white faces above her. And she was suddenly at peace; they were not a white mountain now; they were not pushing her any longer to the edge of life. Its awright...

'She shot Booker!'

'She hada gun in the sheet!'

'She shot im right thu the head!'

'Whut she shoot im fer?'

'Kill the bitch!'

'Ah *thought* something wuz wrong bout her!'

'Ah wuz fer givin it t her from the firs!'

'Thas whut yuh git fer treatin a nigger nice!'

'Say, Bookers dead!'

She stopped looking into the white faces, stopped listening.

She waited, giving up her life before they took it from her; she had done what she wanted. Ef only Johnny-Boy . . . She looked at him; he lay looking at her with tired eyes. Ef she could only tell im!

'Whut yuh kill im fer, hunh?'

It was the sheriff's voice; she did not answer.

'Mabbe she wuz shootin at yuh, Sheriff?'

'Whut yuh kill im fer?'

She felt the sheriff's foot come into her side; she closed her eyes.

'Yuh black bitch!'

'Let her have it!'

'Yuh reckon she foun out bout Booker?'

'She mighta.'

'Jesus Christ, whut yuh dummies *waitin* on!'

'Yeah; kill her!'

'Kill em *both*!'

'Let her know her nigger sons dead firs!'

She turned her head toward Johnny-Boy; he lay looking puzzled in a world beyond the reach of voices. At leas he cant hear, she thought.

'C mon, let im have it!'

She listened to hear what Johnny-Boy could not. They came, two of them, one right behind the other; so close together that they sounded like one shot. She did not look at Johnny-Boy now; she looked at the white faces of the men, hard and wet in the glare of the flashlights.

'Yuh hear tha, nigger woman?'

'Did tha surprise im? Hes in hell now wonderin whut hit im!'

'C mon! Give it t her, Sheriff!'

'Lemme shoot her, Sheriff! It wuz mah pal she shot!'

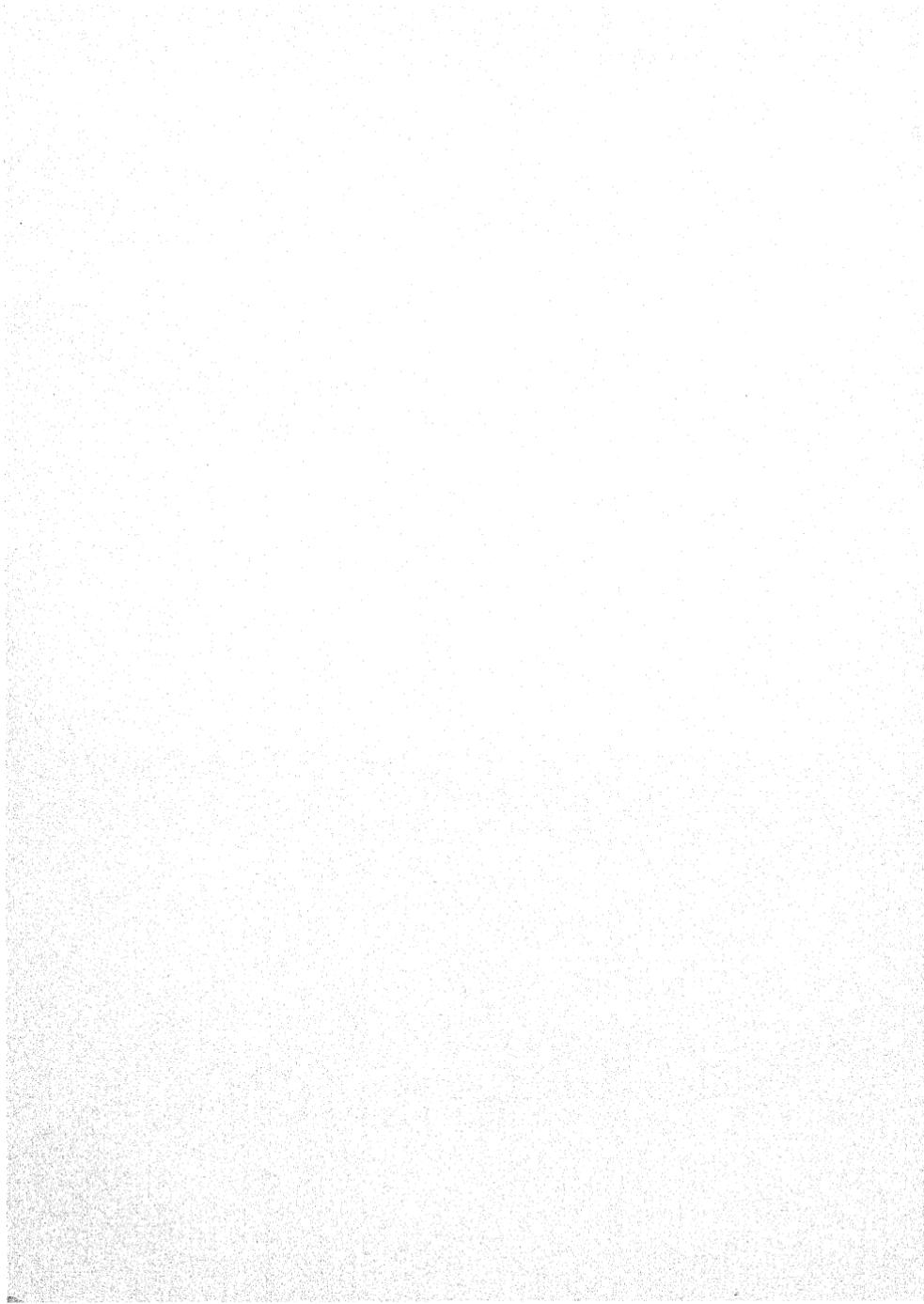
'Awright, Pete! Thas fair ernuff!'

She gave up as much of her life as she could before they took it from her. But the sound of the shot and the streak of fire that

tore its way through her chest forced her to live again, intensely. She had not moved, save for the slight jarring impact of the bullet. She felt the heat of her own blood warming her cold, wet back. She yearned suddenly to talk. 'Yuh didnt git whut yuh wanted! N yuh ain gonna nevah git it! Yuh didnt kill me; Ah come here my mahsef . . .' She felt rain falling into her wide-open, dimming eyes and heard faint voices. Her lips moved soundlessly. *Yuh didnt git yuh didnt yuh didnt . . .* Focused and pointed she was, buried in the depths of her star, swallowed in its peace and strength; and not feeling her flesh growing cold, cold as the rain that fell from the invisible sky upon the doomed living and the dead that never dies.

THE YEARBOOK OF THE AMERICAN SHORT  
STORY

JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 1938



## ABBREVIATIONS

### I. PERIODICALS

<i>A.L.</i>	American Literature.
<i>A.Merc.</i>	American Mercury.
<i>Am.P.</i>	American Prefaces.
<i>A.R.</i>	American Review.
<i>Ana.</i>	Americana.
<i>Asia.</i>	Asia.
<i>Atl.</i>	Atlantic Monthly.
<i>Books.</i>	Books (New York Herald Tribune).
<i>C.B.</i>	Christmas Books, Hunter College.
<i>C.For.</i>	Canadian Forum.
<i>C.G.</i>	Country Gentleman.
<i>C.H.J.</i>	Canadian Home Journal.
<i>Cath.W.</i>	Catholic World.
<i>Col.</i>	Collier's Weekly.
<i>Colum.</i>	Columbia.
<i>Com.</i>	Commonweal.
<i>Cor.</i>	Coronet.
<i>Corn.</i>	Cornhill Magazine (London).
<i>Cos.</i>	Cosmopolitan.
<i>Dub.M.</i>	Dublin Magazine (Ireland).
<i>Eng.J.</i>	English Journal.
<i>Esq.</i>	Esquire.
<i>Essex.</i>	Essex Institute Historical Collections.
<i>Fan.</i>	Fantasy.
<i>Fight.</i>	Fight.
<i>For.</i>	Forum.
<i>Frontier.</i>	Frontier and Midland.
<i>Gra.</i>	Graphic (Manila).
<i>Hai.</i>	Hairenik.
<i>Harp.B.(N.Y.)</i>	Harper's Bazaar (New York).
<i>Harp.M.</i>	Harper's Magazine.
<i>Hin.</i>	Hinterland.
<i>House.</i>	Household Magazine.
<i>I.L.</i>	International Literature (Moscow).
<i>J.o'L.</i>	John o' London's Weekly (London).
<i>Kans.</i>	Kansas Magazine.
<i>L.L.</i>	Life and Letters To-day. (London).
<i>L.Merc.</i>	London Mercury.
<i>Ly.</i>	Liberty.
<i>M.L.N.</i>	Modern Language Notes.
<i>M.Q.</i>	Modern Quarterly.
<i>M.T.Q.</i>	Mark Twain Quarterly.
<i>Maclean.</i>	Maclean's Magazine.
<i>Manu.</i>	Short Story Manuscripts of 1938.
<i>Men.J.</i>	Menorah Journal.
<i>Minn.Hist.</i>	Minnesota History.
<i>Mod.M.</i>	Modern Monthly.
<i>N.A.Rev.</i>	North American Review.
<i>N.E.Q.</i>	New England Quarterly.
<i>N.M.Q.</i>	New Mexico Quarterly.
<i>N.Mass.</i>	New Masses.
<i>N.Rep.</i>	New Republic.
<i>N.Y.</i>	New Yorker.
<i>N.Y.Times</i>	New York Times Book Review.
<i>Nat.</i>	Nation.
<i>O.S.A.H.Q.</i>	Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly.

<i>Opp.</i>	Opportunity.
<i>Part.R.</i>	Partisan Review.
<i>Phil.</i>	Philippine Magazine.
<i>Phil.Q.</i>	Philological Quarterly.
<i>Phoe.</i>	Phoenix.
<i>Pr.S.</i>	Prairie Schooner.
<i>Psy.</i>	Psychoanalytic Review.
<i>Pub.W.</i>	Publishers' Weekly.
<i>Q.Q.</i>	Queen's Quarterly.
<i>R.C.</i>	Reading and Collecting.
<i>Red Bk.</i>	Red Book Magazine.
<i>Rocky.</i>	Rocky Mountain Review.
<i>S.E.P.</i>	Saturday Evening Post.
<i>S.L.T.</i>	Salt Lake Tribune.
<i>S.P.</i>	Studies in Philology.
<i>S.W.</i>	Southwest Review.
<i>Sat.R.(N.Y.)</i>	Saturday Review of Literature.
<i>Scan.</i>	American-Scandinavian Review.
<i>Scr.</i>	Scribner's Magazine.
<i>Seven.</i>	Seven.
<i>Sew.R.</i>	Sewanee Review.
<i>So.Atl.Q.</i>	South Atlantic Quarterly.
<i>So.R.</i>	Southern Review.
<i>Sto.</i>	Story.
<i>T.T.</i>	Time and Tide (London).
<i>T.Y.</i>	Twice a Year.
<i>Tan.</i>	Tanager.
<i>U.R.</i>	University Review.
<i>U.T.Q.</i>	University of Toronto Quarterly.
<i>Univ.Tex.St.Eng.</i>	University of Texas Studies in English.
<i>Va.</i>	Virginia Quarterly Review.
<i>W.H.C.</i>	Woman's Home Companion.
<i>Yale.</i>	Yale Review.
<i>Yan.</i>	Yankee.

## II. BOOKS

<i>Bell C.</i>	Bell. The Smallways Rub Along. (English edition.)
<i>Benét C.</i>	Benét. Johnny Pye and the Fool-Killer.
<i>Benson J.</i>	Benson. Emily.
<i>Blackwood E.</i>	Blackwood. Tales. (English edition.)
<i>Bodington.</i>	Bodington. Solo. (English edition.)
<i>Booth.</i>	Booth, <i>editor</i> . A Cabinet of Gems.
<i>Bowes-Lyon.</i>	Bowes-Lyon. You Were There. (English edition.)
<i>Bullett D.</i>	Bullett. Twenty-Four Tales. (English edition.)
<i>Butts B.</i>	Butts. Last Stories. (English edition.)
<i>Calderon.</i>	Calderon. The White Llama. (English edition.)
<i>Caldwell F.</i>	Caldwell. Southways.
<i>Coppard R.</i>	Coppard. Tapster's Tapestry. (English edition.)
<i>Digges.</i>	Digges. Bowleg Bill.
<i>Ertz B.</i>	Ertz. Big Frogs and Little Frogs. (English edition.)
<i>Fallon.</i>	Fallon. Lighting-Up Time. (Irish edition.)
<i>Faulkner E.</i>	Faulkner. The Unvanquished.
<i>Ferber E.</i>	Ferber. Nobody's in Town.
<i>Frost B.</i>	Frost. The Good Pain. (English edition.)
<i>Gissing B.</i>	Gissing. Stories and Sketches. (English edition.)
<i>Gloag.</i>	Gloag. It Makes a Nice Change. (English edition.)
<i>Greene E.</i>	Greene. Death in the Deep South.
<i>Halvard B.</i>	Halvard. The Money's All Right. (English edition.)
<i>Hanley G.</i>	Hanley. People Are Curious. (English edition.)
<i>Horgan B.</i>	Horgan. Far from Cibola.
<i>Horwath.</i>	Horwath. A Child of our Time. (English edition.)
<i>Houll.</i>	Houll. Nine Years is a Long Time. (English edition.)
<i>Household.</i>	Household. The Salvation of Pisco Gabar. (English edition.)
<i>Housman E.</i>	Housman. What Next? (English edition.)
<i>Hurley.</i>	Hurley. The Old Parish.

Kaye-Smith C. .... Kaye-Smith. *Faithful Stranger*. (English edition.)  
 Kipling E. .... Kipling. 'Teem.'  
 Knight .... Knight and others. *The Flying Yorkshireman*.  
 Kreitman .... Kreitman, editor. *Jewish Short Stories of To-day*. (English edition.)  
 Kyösti .... Larin-Kyösti. *Northern Lights*. (English edition.)  
 Lehmann E. .... Lehmann, editor. *New Writing*. 5. (English edition.)  
 Lehmann F. .... Lehmann, editor. *New Writing. New Series*. 1. (English edition.)  
 Mackenzie B. .... Mackenzie. *The Angle of Error*. (English edition.)  
 Maltz .... Maltz. *The Way Things Are*.  
 Marlowe B. .... Marlowe. *Their Little Lives*. (English edition.)  
 Marriott .... Marriott, editor. *An Anthology of Modern Short Stories*. (English edition.)  
 Maulvaul. .... Maulvaul. *Spanish Recruit*. (English edition.)  
 Moffat .... Moffat. *The Prejudices of Mr. Pennyfeather*.  
 Morris B. .... Morris. *Birth of an Old Lady*. (English edition.)  
 Mullen .... Mullen. *Irish Tales*. (English edition.)  
 Nathan .... Nathan. *Journey of Tapiola*.  
 New Zealand .... Allen, editor. *Tales by New Zealanders*. (English edition.)  
 O'Brien VV .... O'Brien, editor. *The Best Short Stories: 1938*.  
 O'Brien WW .... O'Brien, editor. *The Best British Short Stories: 1938*.  
 Parade .... Martin, editor. *Parade of Time*. (English edition.)  
 Penguin B. .... Roberts, editor. *Penguin Parade*. 2. (English edition.)  
 Penguin C. .... Roberts, editor. *Penguin Parade*. 3. (English edition.)  
 Penguin D. .... Roberts, editor. *Penguin Parade*. 4. (English edition.)  
 Pirandello F. .... Pirandello. *A Character in Distress*. (English edition.)  
 Plisnier .... Plisnier. *Memoirs of a Secret Revolutionary*. (English edition.)  
 Pritchett B. .... Pritchett. *You Make Your Own Life*. (English edition.)  
 Sabsay .... Sabsay. *Through Tunnels and Canyons Roared a Train*.  
 Saroyan E. .... Saroyan. *Love, Here Is My Hat*.  
 Saroyan G. .... Saroyan. *The Trouble With Tigers*.  
 Schwarz B. .... Schwarz, editor. *A Golden Treasury of Jewish Literature*.  
 Shearing .... Shearing. *Orange Blossoms*.  
 Singer .... Singer. *The River Breaks Up*.  
 Steele G. .... Steele, editor. *Selected Modern Short Stories*. (English edition.)  
 Stegner B. .... Stegner. *The Potter's House*.  
 Steinbeck F. .... Steinbeck. *The Long Valley*. (English edition.)  
 Steinhauer .... Steinhauer and Jessiman, editors. *Modern German Short Stories*.  
 Stern C. .... Stern. *Something Wrong*. (English edition.)  
 Strachwitz .... Strachwitz, editor. *Great Stories from Austria*. (English edition.)  
 Strong G. .... Strong. *The Nice Cup o' Tea*. (English edition.)  
 Thompson C. .... Thompson. *Lancashire Fun*. (English edition.)  
 Traill B. .... Traill. *Six of One*. (English edition.)  
 Walpole E. .... Walpole. *Head in Green Bronze*.  
 Westerby .... Westerby. *French for Funny*. (English edition.)  
 Williams L. .... Williams. *Life Along the Passaic River*.  
 Wren B. .... Wren. *Rough Shooting*. (English edition.)  
 Wright B. .... Wright. *Uncle Tom's Children*.  
 Young B. .... Young, editor. *Southern Treasury of Life and Literature*.  
 Young C. .... Young. *The Christmas Box*. (English edition.)

## ADDRESSES OF MAGAZINES PUBLISHING SHORT STORIES

### I. AMERICAN AND CANADIAN MAGAZINES

American Magazine, 250 Park Avenue, New York City.  
American Mercury, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York City.  
American Prefaces, University Hall, Iowa City, Iowa.  
American-Scandinavian Review, 116 East 64th Street, New York City.  
Asia, 40 East 49th Street, New York City.  
Atlantic Monthly, 8 Arlington Street, Boston, Mass.  
Canadian Forum, 28 Wellington Street West, Toronto, Ont., Canada.  
Canadian Home Journal, Richmond and Sheppard Streets, Toronto 2, Ont., Canada.  
Canadian Magazine, 345 Adelaide Street West, Toronto, Ont., Canada.  
Catholic World, 401 West 59th Street, New York City.  
Chatelaine, 143 University Avenue, Toronto, Ont., Canada.  
Collier's Weekly, 250 Park Avenue, New York City.  
Columbia, New Haven, Conn.  
Commonweal, 386 Fourth Avenue, New York City.  
Coronet, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.  
Cosmopolitan, 57th Street and Eighth Avenue, New York City.  
Country Gentleman, Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.  
Elks Magazine, 50 East 42nd Street, New York City.  
Esquire, 919 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.  
Fantasy, 950 Heberton Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Fight, Room 701, 268 Fourth Avenue, New York City.  
Forum, 441 Lexington Avenue, New York City.  
Frontier and Midland, University of Montana, Missoula, Mont.  
Globe, 157½ West 5th Street, St. Paul, Minn.  
Good Housekeeping, 57th Street and Eighth Avenue, New York City.  
Hairenik, 13 Shawmut Street, Boston, Mass.  
Harper's Bazaar, 572 Madison Avenue, New York City.  
Harper's Magazine, 49 East 33rd Street, New York City.  
Hinterland, 624 Third Avenue, S.E., Des Moines, Iowa.  
Holland's Magazine, Dallas, Texas.  
Household Magazine, Topeka, Kansas.  
Husk, Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa.  
Intermountain Review, Box 907, Cedar City, Utah.  
Kansas Magazine, Kansas State College, Kansas.  
Ladies' Home Journal, Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.  
Liberty, 1926 Broadway, New York City.  
McCall's Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York City.  
Maclean's Magazine, 481 University Avenue, Toronto, Ont., Canada.  
Menorah Journal, 63 Fifth Avenue, New York City.  
National Home Monthly, Bannatyne and Dagmar, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada.  
New Masses, 31 East 27th Street, New York City.  
New Mexico Quarterly, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, N.M.  
New Republic, 40 East 49th Street, New York City.  
New Yorker, 25 West 43rd Street, New York City.  
North American Review, 587 Fifth Avenue, New York City.  
Opportunity, 1133 Broadway, New York City.  
Partisan Review, 22 East 17th Street, New York City.  
Pictorial Review, 57th Street and Eighth Avenue, New York City.  
Prairie Schooner, Box 1232, Station 'A', Lincoln, Nebraska.  
Queen's Quarterly, Queen's University, Kingston, Ont., Canada.  
Redbook Magazine, 230 Park Avenue, New York City.  
Saturday Evening Post, Independence Square, Philadelphia, Pa.  
Scribner's Magazine, 570 Lexington Avenue, New York City.  
Short Stories, Doubleday, Doran & Co., Garden City, L.I., N.Y.  
Southern Review, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, La.

Southwest Review, Dallas, Texas.  
 Story, 432 Fourth Avenue, New York City.  
 Tanager, P.O. Box 66, Grinnell, Iowa.  
 This Week, 420 Lexington Avenue, New York City.  
 Toronto Star Weekly, Toronto, Ont., Canada.  
 University Review, University of Kansas City, Kansas City, Mo.  
 Virginia Quarterly Review, 8 West Lawn, University, Va.  
 Westways, 2601 South Figueroa Street, Los Angeles, Cal.  
 Woman's Home Companion, 250 Park Avenue, New York City.  
 Woman's World, 461 Eighth Avenue, New York City.  
 Yale Review, 125 High Street, New Haven, Conn.  
 Yankee, Dublin, N.H.

## II. BRITISH, IRISH, AND COLONIAL MAGAZINES

Adelphi, The, 12 Woodside, Erskine Hill, London, N.W. 11.  
 Argosy, Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C. 4.  
 Blackwood's Magazine, 45 George Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.  
 Blue Peter, 12 St. Mary Axe, London, E.C. 3.  
 Britannia and Eve, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Bulletin, 214 George Street North, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.  
 Bystander, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Chambers's Journal, 11 Thistle Street, Edinburgh, Scotland.  
 Cornhill Magazine, 50 Albemarle Street, London, W. 1.  
 Daily Express, Fleet Street, London, E.C. 4.  
 Daily Herald, 12 Wilson Street, Long Acre, London, W.C. 2.  
 Daily Mail, Northcliffe House, London, E.C. 4.  
 Dublin Magazine, 2 Crow Street, Dublin, Irish Free State.  
 Evening Standard, 46 Shoe Lane, London, E.C. 4.  
 Fortnightly Review, 8 More's Passage, 51 Carey Street, London, W.C. 2.  
 G. K.'s Weekly, 2 Little Essex Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Good Housekeeping, 28-30 Grosvenor Gardens, London, S.W. 1.  
 Grand Magazine, 8-11 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Happy Magazine, 8-11 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Harper's Bazaar, 9 Stratton Street, Piccadilly, London, W. 1.  
 Illustrated London News, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 John o'London's Weekly, 8-11 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Lady, 30 Bedford Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Life and Letters To-day, 26 Maiden Lane, London, W.C. 2.  
 Lilliput, Lincoln's Inn Chambers, 40-43 Chancery Lane, London, W.C. 2.  
 Listener, Broadcasting House, Portland Place, London, W. 1.  
 London Mercury, 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C. 1.  
 Manchester Guardian, 3 Cross Street, Manchester.  
 New English Weekly, 7 and 8 Rolls Passage, Chancery Lane, London, E.C. 4.  
 New Statesman and Nation, 10 Great Turnstile, London, W.C. 1.  
 News-Chronicle, 19-22 Bouverie Street, London, E.C. 4.  
 Novel Magazine, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C. 2.  
 Outspan, P.O. Box 245, Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, S. Africa.  
 Pearson's Magazine, 18 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, London, W.C. 2.  
 Queen, Hatfield House, Stamford Street, London, S.E. 1.  
 Quiver, Fleetway House, Farrington Street, London, E.C. 4.  
 Red Magazine, Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C. 4.  
 Sketch, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Spectator, 99 Gower Street, London, W.C. 1.  
 Sphere, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Story-Teller, Tallis House, Tallis Street, London, E.C. 4.  
 Strand Magazine, 8-11 Southampton Street, Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Sydney Mail, 38 Hunter Street, Sydney, N.S.W., Australia.  
 Tatler, 346 Strand, London, W.C. 2.  
 Time and Tide, 32 Bloomsbury Street, London, W.C. 1.  
 Truth, 10 Carteret Street, Queen Anne's Gate, London, S.W. 1.  
 20-Story Magazine, 93 Long Acre, London, W.C. 2.  
 Violet Magazine, Fleetway House, Farrington Street, London, E.C. 4.  
 Windsor Magazine, Warwick House, Salisbury Square, London, E.C. 4.  
 Woman's Journal, Fleetway House, Farrington Street, London, E.C. 4.  
 Woman's Magazine, 4 Bouverie Street, London, E.C. 4.

# ROLL OF HONOR

1938

NOTE. This list excludes reprints

## I. AMERICAN AND CANADIAN AUTHORS

AMERICAN, LEMYEL.	GORDON, CAROLINE.
Fugue in Four and a Million Voices.	Enemy.
BECK, WARREN.	HALPER, ALBERT.
Blue Sash.	Prelude.
BENSON, SALLY.	HEMINGWAY, ERNEST.
Home Atmosphere.	Butterfly and the Tank.
BLEY, E. S.	Denunciation.
Drum-Truck Came.	HOFFMANN, MALCOLM.
BOYLE, KAY.	Fraternity.
Bridegroom's Body.	HORGAN, PAUL.
Life Sentence.	To the Mountains.
Taxi Ride.	JENISON, MADGE.
CALDWELL, RONALD.	True Believer.
Vision in the Sea.	KLINEDORF, EDLM.
CALLAGHAN, MORLEY.	Goofy.
Consuming Fire.	KOMROFF, MANUEL.
Fugitive.	Dark Wanderer.
It Had To Be Done.	Hara-Kiri of Baron Kura.
New Coat.	Little Bit of Butter.
Sentimentalists.	What is a Miracle?
White Pony.	LE SUEUR, MERIDEL.
CARR, A. H. Z.	Salutation to Spring.
Act of Treason.	MACDONALD, ALAN.
CHEEVER, JOHN.	Arm Upraised.
Frère Jacques.	MALTZ, ALBERT.
CLARK, GEAN.	Happiest Man on Earth.
Indian on the Road.	MARCH, WILLIAM.
CLURMAN, ROBERT.	Tune the Old Cow Died To.
Raincoat.	MARCUS, PAUL.
COATES, ROBERT M.	Good-bye.
Accident in the Field.	MAXWELL, WILLIAM.
Beginning of a Journey.	Homecoming.
Passing Through.	MELIKIAN, JOHN.
COHN, DAVID L.	Torn Mix.
Black Troubadour.	NEAGOE, PETER.
CULVER, CHRISTINE.	Drum Beat in Harvest Time.
Girl from the Valley.	NIN, ANAÏS.
DANIELSON, RICHARD ELY.	Birth.
Corporal Hardy.	O'SULLIVAN, VINCENT.
DE JONG, DAVID CORNEL.	In Quiet.
Flood in the Night.	PARKER, DOROTHY.
Only Fools Go to America.	Clothe the Naked.
DERLETH, AUGUST.	PORTER, KATHERINE ANNE.
Sisters.	Pale Horse, Pale Rider.
DONATO, PIETRO DI.	ROBERTS, ELIZABETH MADOX.
It's Cheaper To Be —.	Holy Morning.
DREISER, THEODORE.	Christopher K*A*P*L*A*N.
Tithe of the Lord.	H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N, Samari-
EDMONDS, WALTER D.	tan.
Moses.	Return of H*Y*M*A*N K*A*P*L*A*N.
ELLISON, GEORGE.	ST. JOSEPE, ELLIS.
Lazarus at the Sycamore.	Leviathan.
ELLSON, HAL.	SALTZMAN, ELEANOR.
Mammy Lay Quiet.	Veiled Sky.
Rat Is a Mouse.	

SANCTON, THOMAS.	Eustacia.
Dirty Way.	Gallons or Bushels?
SAROYAN, WILLIAM.	Jumping the Broom.
Anything You Say.	Love in the Spring.
Beautiful White Horse.	Vacation in Hell.
Death.	When the Foxes Flit.
Journey to Hanford.	SUNDGAARD, ARNOLD.
Monumental Arena.	What'll I Say to Her Now?
1924 Cadillac for Sale.	SWEETMAN, SYLVIA.
Piano.	Day at the See.
Pomegranate Trees.	SYLVESTER, HARRY.
SCHOENSTEDT, WALTER.	Crazy Guy.
Girl from the River Barge.	THIELEN, BENEDICT.
Hero of Sussemilken.	Blossoms for My Bride.
SCHULBERG, BUDD WILSON.	Dark Continent.
Passport to Nowhere.	Ship at Anchor.
SEAGER, ALLAN.	Thunderstorm.
Berkshire Comedy.	WARREN, ROBERT PENN.
SEIDE, MICHAEL.	How Willie Proudin Came Home.
Bad Boy from Brooklyn.	WATKINS, EDMUND.
SINCLAIR, JO.	At Thy Sweet Voice.
Children at Play.	WEILY, EUDORA.
SMITTER, WESSEL.	Curtain of Green.
F.O.B. Detroit.	Whistle.
STEGNER, WALLACE.	WERNER, HEINZ.
Potter's House.	Black Tobias and the Empire.
STEINBECK, JOHN.	WESTBROOK, JR., FRANCIS A.
Harness.	Big Shot.
Snake of One's Own.	WILSON, MICHAEL.
STEPHENS, GEORGE D.	He Sings in the City.
Alligator Bait.	WOLFE, THOMAS.
STEPHENSON, CARL.	Chickamauga.
Leinenigen versus the Ants.	WOLVERT, IRA.
STEVENSON, EDWARD.	Finally Harriet.
Little Father.	Way the Luck Runs.
STILL, JAMES.	WRIGHT, EUGENE.
Uncle Jolly.	White Camel.
STUART, JESSE.	WRIGHT, RICHARD.
Brother Spencer Takes a Bride.	Bright and Morning Star.
Brothers.	Fire and Cloud.

## II. BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

BATES, RALPH.	O'CONNOR, FRANK.
Forty-Third Division.	Flowering Trees.
In the Midst of Death We Live.	O'FAOLÁIN, SEÁN.
BEACHCROFT, T. O.	Three Clever Sisters.
Erne from the Coast.	O'FLAHERTY, LIAM.
DUNSANY, LORD.	Brosnan.
Development of the Rillswood Es- tate.	Galway Bay.
HARRIS, CLARE SPARKES.	Water Hen.
Negative of a Man.	PRITCHETT, V. S.
HOUSEHOLD, GEOFFREY.	Page and Monarch.
Delilah of the Backstairs.	SITWELL, OSBERT.
Hell Needs a Chaplain.	Champagne for the Old Lady.
Irishman and a Jew.	STRONG, L. A. G.
KNIGHT, ERIC.	Ails of Clonbocketty.
Never Come Monday.	At the Barber's.
Strong in the Arms.	WESTERBY, ROBERT.
MILLIN, SARAH GERTRUDE.	Money on Morgan.
I Did This Thing.	WOOLF, VIRGINIA.
	Duchess and the Jeweler.

## III. TRANSLATIONS

GORKY, MAXIM. ( <i>Russian.</i> )	LATZKO, ANDREAS. ( <i>Hungarian.</i> )
At the Salt Mines.	Marcia Reale.
Dividing-Up.	ZWEIG, ARNOLD. ( <i>German.</i> )
Rendezvous.	Plea to Richelieu.
KAFKA, FRANZ. ( <i>German.</i> )	
Blumfeld, an Elderly Bachelor.	

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICES

NOTE. These notices refer only to American authors whose work appears in the Roll of Honor in this series for the first time. Biographical notices of other authors included in this year's Roll of Honor may be found, with one or two exceptions, in earlier volumes of the series.

BECK, WARREN. Grew up in Richmond, Indiana. Graduate of Earlham College, 1921. M.A., Columbia University, 1926. Now Professor of English, Lawrence College. Has written twenty-three one-act plays. Married. Lives in Appleton, Wisconsin.

BLEV, EDGAR S. Born in 1916. Lives in New York City.

CALDWELL, RONALD. Born in San Francisco, 1909. High school education. Has been in the navy. Lives in Los Angeles.

CLARK, GEAN. Born in Utah, 1911. Educated at Brigham Young University, University of Chicago, University of California, New York University, and Columbia University. Has been librarian, private secretary, and teacher. Now teaching at Carbon College, Price, Utah.

CLURMAN, ROBERT. Born in New York City, 1919. Lived in Miami, Florida, from 1923 to 1926. Attended public school in Rockville Centre, N.Y. Now student at Harvard University. Awarded first prize in the Intercollegiate short story contest, 1937, by *Story*.

COHN, DAVID L. Born in Greenville, Mississippi, 1896. Educated at Greenville High School, University of Virginia, and Yale University. Served in the United States Navy during the war. Later entered business in New Orleans, and retired to write in 1934. Lives in Yanceyville, North Carolina.

DANIELSON, RICHARD ELY. Born in Brooklyn, Connecticut, 1885. Educated at William Penn Charter School, Philadelphia. B.A., Yale University, 1907; M.A., 1910. During the war, Captain of Infantry, A.E.F. Editor of *The Independent*, 1924-28. Editor and publisher of *The Sportsman*, 1927-37. Lives at Groton, Massachusetts.

ELLISON, HAL. Born in Brooklyn, N.Y., 1910. High school education. 'I've been a dish washer and night watchman on a ship, helper on a truck and a driver. Worked myself to death in a fur-vault. We were known as vault-rats. The vault was known as the Bastille. Didn't see sunlight for months at a time. None of my friends saw me. I worked with eastsiders, Brownsville boys and the Laplanders from the Bronx. Locked in the vault, though, in the late hours I did plenty of writing. I've got enough dust and hair in my lungs to spit a mink coat. Our shift was long and so sometimes we took time out to sleep on Lily Pons' ostrich-feather rug with maybe a polar bear pulled over us so the boss wouldn't catch us. Then I worked in a raw-fur place along Seventh Avenue with German Jewish refugees. I sold junk to the Italians. I've been a farmhand out on Long Island among Polack and Russian hands and occasional hoboes. I taught fencing for nothing at a college for a year. Taught boxing gratis at the 'Y.' Then for four years after school I played football all over Long Island, etc. I went to college at night and quit after I had to pay for a lot of worthless crap. Fenced most of the best fencers in America, beat a few of them, and took more shellackings than any man in the U.S.A. Then I managed a fighter. He ran out on me. I started raising dogs. My grandmother threw a fit hemorrhage and I gave that up. I sold eggs from my chickens. Quit that after a while. Now I'm working nights, living upside down. I got the job a year and a half ago and started writing one thousand words a day. Did that a year and a half. Now writing two thousand a day and easier than the one, and having the time of my life because it still is a lala of a battle.' Lives in Brooklyn, N.Y.

JENISON, MADGE. Born in Chicago, 1874. Educated at Wells College and University of Chicago. Managed for four years a New York book shop called 'The Sunwise Turn.' Has written three novels and the history of this famous shop. Lives at Snedenes Landing, Palisades, N.Y.

**KLINEDORF, ELMA.** Born in Windber, Pennsylvania. Has spent most of her life in Gary, Indiana, where she is now doing personnel work with the Indiana State Employment Service. Graduated from the University of Chicago, 1929.

**LUDLOW, DON.** Born in Waterloo, Iowa. Lived later in Chicago and on a dry farm in Western South Dakota. 'The first crop was eaten by the crows and rabbits. That winter we ate the rabbits. It was like that until 1919, when I left, via freight train. In the fall of 1920, hungry, I joined the army. A year later I arrived in San Francisco. Worked in a foundry, a candy factory and a round house; dug ditches, drove a car for a bootlegger and jerked soda. Got a job blasting stumps to clear a lot and blew the windows out of a house a block away. At eighteen I decided to settle down, got married and, soon after, became a fruit tramp, migrating from job to job, working in the fields and packing sheds of California, Oregon, and Washington. My education, if any, was gained through six years at public schools and a multitude of public libraries. I have aided, in a minor and unofficial capacity, in the compilation of a factual report on migratory labour in California.' Lives in Berkeley, California.

**MACDONALD, ALAN.** Born 1900 at Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania. Attended college there and at neighbouring Grove City, worked at mine engineering, banking, school teaching, then newspaper work. Real name is Jack M. MacDonald. Advertising manager of Grove City *Reporter-Herald*. Edits *Signal* in Slippery Rock.

**MARCUS, PAUL.** Born in Muscoda, Wisconsin. Educated at the University of Wisconsin. Married. Lives in Woodstock, N.Y.

**NIN, ANAIS.** Born in Spain, 1903. Author of 'D. H. Lawrence' and 'House of Incest.' Has written an unpublished diary in fifty volumes. Has been an artist's model and has danced Spanish dances on the stage. Now lives on a barge on the Seine.

**SANCTON, THOMAS.** Born in Panama, 1915, where his parents had moved from New Orleans. He has lived in New Orleans ever since he was an infant. Educated at Tulane University. Now does newspaper work.

**SCHOENSTEDT, WALTER.** Born in Bernburg on the Salle, Germany, 1909. Had the usual struggles of German youths after the war. At sixteen, was a horse dealer in company with a band of gypsies, roaming through East Prussia, Poland, and Lithuania. Has been a day laborer in the building of the Berlin subway. Traveled through Switzerland, Italy, and France, earning his way as an entertainer and singer. Author of three well known books in German, and of 'In Praise of Life,' 1939. First came to America in 1935 and returned later as an emigrant. Lives in New York City.

**SCHULBERG, BUDD WILSON.** Born in New York City, 1914. Has lived in Hollywood for twenty years. Graduated from Dartmouth College, 1936. Married.

**SEIDE, MICHAEL.** Born in Brest Litovsk, Poland, 1910. Came to the United States in 1914. Educated at the College of the City of New York and Columbia University. Lives in Brooklyn, New York.

**SINCLAIR, JO.** Born in Brooklyn, New York. Is twenty-five years old. Has written a Negro play. Lives in Cleveland, Ohio.

**STEVENSON, EDWARD.** Born in New Rochelle, N.Y., 1908. Public School education. Married.

**SUNDGAARD, ARNOLD.** Born at Gladstone, Minnesota. Twenty-eight years old. Educated at the University of Wisconsin and Yale University. Worked for the Federal Theatre in Chicago as a playreader. Author of two plays: 'Spirochete' and 'Everywhere I Roam.' Lives in New York City.

**SWEETMAN, SYLVIA.** Born on her father's ranch in Montana, 1911. Educated in school in Montana, Virginia, and Hollywood. Graduated from the University of Montana, 1933. Taught English in a Washington State high school for two years and spent a year abroad in England and Germany. Married. Lives in Schenectady, N.Y.

**WATKINS, EDMUND.** Born in Rye, N.Y. Childhood spent in Kentucky and North Carolina. Has lived since 1912 in or near Philadelphia. Educated at Episcopal Academy, Overbrook, Pennsylvania. Works in a brokerage house.

**WELTY, EUDORA.** Lives in Jackson, Mississippi, and has been writing stories for about two years. She is also interested in photography and has had two exhibits of Southern and Negro pictures in New York.

**WESTBROOK, JR., FRANCIS A.** Born in Connecticut. Has lived in New York City and in New Hampshire. Graduated from Harvard University, 1936. Has worked in the irrigation ditches of eastern Montana, been a bank runner and bookseller in New York, as well as companion and tutor, has worked as a reporter on a Wyoming newspaper, studied at the University of Missouri, sold toys in a department store, and is now a newspaper reporter. Lives in Burlington, Vermont.

**WILSON, MICHAEL.** Born in McAlester, Oklahoma. Graduated from University of California, 1936. Taught there, 1936-37. Studied politics, 1937-38. Now Phelan Scholar in Creative Literature, University of California. Lives in Berkeley, California.

# THE BEST BOOKS OF SHORT STORIES

1938

## I. AMERICAN AUTHORS

1. BENSON, SALLY. *Emily*. Random House.
2. CALDWELL, ERSKINE. *Southways*. Viking Press.
3. FAULKNER, WILLIAM. *Unvanquished*. Random House.
4. HEMINGWAY, ERNEST. *Fifth Column and The First Forty-Nine Stories*. Scribner.
5. HORGAN, PAUL. *Far from Cibola*. Harper.
6. KNIGHT, ERIC, and others. *Flying Yorkshireman*. Harper.
7. MALTZ, ALBERT. *Way Things Are*. International Publishers.
8. SAROYAN, WILLIAM. *Love, Here Is My Hat!* Modern Age Books.
9. SAROYAN, WILLIAM. *Trouble with Tigers*. Harcourt, Brace.
10. STEGNER, WALLACE. *Potter's House*. Muscatine, Iowa. Prairie Press.
11. STEINBECK, JOHN. *Long Valley*. Viking Press.
12. WILLIAMS, WILLIAM CARLOS. *Life Along the Passaic River*. Norfolk, Conn. New Directions.
13. WRIGHT, RICHARD. *Uncle Tom's Children*. Harper.

## II. BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

14. GREENWOOD, WALTER. *Cleft Stick*. Stokes.
15. HOLTBY, WINIFRED. *Pavements at Anderby*. Macmillan.
16. JONES, GLYN. *Blue Bed*. Dutton.
17. KAYE-SMITH, SHEILA. *Faithful Stranger*. Harper.
18. LEHMANN, JOHN, *editor*: *New Writing: Fall, 1938*. Knopf.
19. O'FAOLÁIN, SEÁN. *Purse of Coppers*. Viking Press.

## III. TRANSLATIONS

20. CHEKHOV, ANTON. (*Russian*.) *Plays and Stories*. Dutton.
21. SINGER, I. J. (*Yiddish*.) *River Breaks Up*. Knopf.
22. STEINHAUER, H., and JESSIMAN, HELEN, *translators*. (*German*.) *Modern German Short Stories*. Oxford University Press.

## VOLUMES OF SHORT STORIES

PUBLISHED IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

1938

NOTE. An asterisk before a title indicates distinction.

### I. AMERICAN AND CANADIAN AUTHORS

BAKER, LOUISE SOUTHERN. *Eunice Hussey*. Nantucket: Inquirer and Mirror Press.

BECKER, MAY LAMBERTON, *editor*. *\*Golden Tales of Canada*. Dodd, Mead.

BENÉT, STEPHEN VINCENT. *\*Johnny Pye and the Fool-Killer*. Farrar and Rinehart.

BENNETT, GEORGIA E. *Johns*. Christopher.

BENSON, SALLY. *\*Emily*. Random House.

BOCK, WALTER. *Perfect Start*. Plainfield, N.J.: The Author.

BURR, JANE. *Queen is Dead*. Eliot Pub. Co.

CALDWELL, ERSKINE. *\*Southways*. Viking Press.

CANIZIO, NICHOLAS M. *Driven to Madness*. Pegasus Pub. Co.

CARSON, DE WITT. *'My Goodness!' Said the Princess*. Kinsey.

CHEYNEY, PETER. *Dames Don't Care*. Coward-McCann.

CLARKE, FRANCES E., *editor*. *Gallant Horses*. Macmillan.

CLOUSE, MARY E. *Currency of Love*. Meador.

COHEN, OCTAVUS ROY. *Florian Slaphey*. Appleton-Century.

DERLETH, AUGUST W. *\*Any Day Now*. Chicago: Normandie House.

DIGGES, JEREMIAH. *\*Bowleg Bill*. Viking Press.

DUN, JOHN. *No New Frontiers*. East Aurora, N.Y.: Roycrofters.

DUNBAR, PAUL LAURENCE. *\*Best Stories*. Dodd, Mead.

ELLBERG, JOHN. *Tales of a Rambler*. Macaulay.

FAULKNER, WILLIAM. *\*Unvanquished*. Random House.

FECHIN, ALEXANDRA. *March of the Past*. Santa Fé: Writers' Editions.

FERBER, EDNA. *Nobody's in Town*. Doubleday, Doran.

GREEN, HAROLD EVERETT. *Last Day*. Bruce Humphries.

GREENE, WARD. *\*Death in the Deep South*. American Mercury.

HADDAD, IBRAHIM K. *Polygon*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Christian Party Press.

HANSEN, HARRY, *editor*. *\*O. Henry Memorial Award Prize Stories of 1938*. Doubleday, Doran.

HEMINGWAY, ERNEST. *\*Fifth Column and The First Forty-Nine Stories*. Scribner.

HEYWOOD, SUSAN MERRICK. *Mau Mau Nancy*. Atlanta: Higgins-McArthur Co.

HORGAN, PAUL. *\*Far from Cibola*. Harper.

HURLEY, DORAN. *Old Parish*. Longmans, Green.

KNIGHT, ERIC M., and others. *\*Flying Yorkshireman*. Harper.

LAUGHLIN, JAMES. *River*. Norfolk, Ct.: New Directions.

LEWIS, ELIZABETH FOREMAN. *Portraits from a Chinese Scroll*. Winston.

MALTZ, ALBERT. *\*Way Things Are*. International Publishers.

MANKIN, VIRGINIA T. *Mountain Code*. Dorrance.

MEACHAM, BEAMON RAY. *Dog Fight*. Fortuny's.

MITCHELL, RUTH COMFORT. *His Wife Could Eat No Lean*. San Francisco: Book Club of California.

MOFFAT, DONALD. *Prejudices of Mr. Pennyfeather*. Little, Brown.

NATHAN, ROBERT. *\*Journey of Tapiola*. Knopf.

NEWMAN, LUCY WHEELER. *Along the Yangtze River*. Christopher.

NORRIS, KATHLEEN. *Baker's Dozen*. Doubleday, Doran.

O'BRIEN, EDWARD J., *editor*. *The Best Short Stories: 1938*. Houghton Mifflin.

OWEN, FRANK. *Husband for Kutani*. Furman.

PACKARD, FRANK L. *More Knaves than One*. Doubleday, Doran.

Post Stories of 1937. Little, Brown.

RUNYON, DAMON. *Best of Runyon*. Stokes. *Take it Easy*. Stokes.

SABSBY, NAHUM. \*Through Tunnels and Canyons Roared a Train. San Francisco: T. W. McDonald.

SAROVAN, WILLIAM. \*Love, Here is My Hat! Modern Age Books. \*Native American. San Francisco: George Fields. \*Trouble with Tigers. Harcourt, Brace.

SAYERS, TOM. Town is Born. Macmillan.

SMITH, CLIFFORD W. Shades of Priscilla. Fortuny's.

SMITH, EDMUND WARE. Tall Tales and Short. Derrydale Press.

STATLER, DAVID. Roaring Guns. Simon and Schuster.

STEGNER, WALLACE. \*Potter's House. Muscatine, Iowa: Prairie Press.

STEINBECK, JOHN. \*Long Valley. Viking Press.

TABER, GLADYS B. Long Tails and Short. Macrae-Smith.

TALIAFERRO, HARDEN E. Carolina Humor: Sketches. Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press.

TRAIN, ARTHUR. Old Man Tutt. Scribner.

WILLIAMS, WILLIAM CARLOS. \*Life Along the Passaic River. Norfolk, Conn.: New Directions.

WRIGHT, RICHARD. \*Uncle Tom's Children. Harper.

YOUNG, STARK, *editor*. \*Southern Treasury of Life and Literature. Scribner.

## II. BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

BAILEY, H. C. This is Mr. Fortune. Doubleday, Doran.

BENTLEY, E. C. Trent Intervenes. Knopf.

BOOTH, BRADFORD ALLEN, *editor*. \*Cabinet of Gems. University of California Press.

DELAFIELD, E. M. \*When Women Love. Harper.

GOMES, ALBERT, *editor*. From Trinidad. Port-of-Spain, Trinidad: Fraser's Printerie.

GREENWOOD, WALTER. \*Cleft Stick. Stokes.

HOLTY, WINIFRED. \*Pavements at Anderby. Macmillan.

JONES, GLYN. \*Blue Bed. Dutton.

KAYE-SMITH, SHEILA. \*Faithful Stranger. Harper.

KIPLING, RUDYARD. 'Teen' — A Treasure-Hunter. Doubleday, Doran.

LEHMANN, JOHN, *editor*. \*New Writing: Fall, 1938. Knopf.

LUCAS, F. L. Woman Clothed with the Sun. Simon and Schuster.

O'BRIEN, EDWARD J., *editor*. Best British Short Stories: 1938. Houghton Mifflin.

O'FAOLÁIN, SEÁN. \*Purse of Coppers. Viking Press.

OPPENHEIM, E. PHILLIPS. Curious Happenings to the Rooke Legatees. Little, Brown.

SABATINI, RAFAEL. Historical Nights' Entertainment. Third Series. Houghton Mifflin.

SWAFFER, HANNEN. When Men Talk Truth. Bruce Humphries.

WALPOLE, HUGH. \*Head in Green Bronze. Doubleday, Doran.

WELLS, H. G. \*Brothers. Viking Press.

## III. TRANSLATIONS

CHEKHOV, ANTON. (*Russian*.) \*Plays and Stories. Dutton.

SINGER, I. J. (*Yiddish*.) \*River Breaks Up. Knopf.

STEINHAUER, H., and JESSIMAN, HELEN, *translators*. (*German*.) \*Modern German Short Stories. Oxford University Press.

# ARTICLES ON THE SHORT STORY IN AMERICAN PERIODICALS

1938

## A

Allen, Grant.

By George Herbert Clarke. *Q. Q.* Winter. (45:487.)

American Short Story.

By Charles Allen. *Am. P.* Jun. (3:136.)

By Howard Baker. *So. R.* Winter. (3:576.)

By Ruth Bower. *Books.* Nov. 6. (14.)

By William L. Chenery. *Sat. R. (N.Y.)* Jun. 18. (3.)

By V. L. O. Chittick. *Frontier. Summer.* (18:275.)

By Eleanor Clark. *Part. R. Mar.* (56.)

By De Lancey Ferguson. *A. L. Jan.* (9:482.)

By Ada Hastings Hedges. *Frontier. Spring.* (18:211.)

By John Hersey. *Books. Apr. 24. (12.) May 29.* (8.)

By Alfred Kazin. *Books. Mar. 13.* (16.)

By Louis Kronenberger. *N.Y. Times. Jun. 5.* (7.)

By Ulysses Lee. *Opp. Mar.* (16:88.)

By Harry Levin. *Nat. Feb. 12.* (146:185.)

By Marjorie Mautz. *Frontier. Summer.* (18:273.) *Autumn.* (19:70.)

By Edith Mirrieles. *Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jan. 15.* (3.)

By Paul Rosenfeld. *Books. Oct. 30.* (24.)

By Samuel Sillen. *N. Mass. Nov. 8.* (23.)

By Richard Vaughan. *N. Rep. Jan. 19.* (93:318.)

By Edith H. Walton. *N.Y. Times. May 1. (6.) May 8. (7.) Nov. 13. (6.)*

Andersen, Hans Christian.

By Paul Rosenfeld. *Sat. R. (N.Y.) May 14.* (10.)

Annunzio, Gabrielle d'.

By Edward Angly. *Books. Jun. 19.* (4.)

By Ernest Boyd. *Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jun. 11.* (6.)

By H. W. L. Dana. *N. Mass. Mar. 29.* (19.)

By Clifton Fadiman. *N.Y. Jun. 11.* (69.)

By Marcel F. Grilli. *N. Mass. Jul. 12.* (28.)

By Arthur Livingston. *N.Y. Times. Jun. 12.* (1.)

By Paul Rosenfeld. *Sat. R. (N.Y.) Mar. 12.* (14.)

By Stark Young. *N. Rep. Sept. 28.* (66:214.)

## B

Bates, Ralph.

By Dorothy Brewster. *N. Mass. Jan. 11.* (28.)

Benét, Stephen Vincent.

By Robert P. Tristram Coffin. *Yan. Aug.* (6.)

By Mary M. Colum. *Por. Oct.* (100:162.)

By W. M. *Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jul. 2.* (20.)

Benson, Sally.

By Rose C. Feld. *N.Y. Times. Jul. 31.* (6.)

By Katharine Simonds. *Sat. R. (N.Y.) Aug. 6.* (7.)

By Frances Woodward. *Books. Jul. 31.* (6.)

Boyle, Kay.

By Howard Baker. *So. R. Winter.* (3:576.)

British Short Story.

By Ruth Bower. *Books. Oct. 16.* (18.)

By Harry Levin. *Nat. Feb. 12.* (146:185.)

By Melba Grimes Marlett. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Nov. 5. (19.)  
 By Richard Vaughan. N. Rep. Jan. 19. (93:318.)  
 By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Nov. 20. (7.)  
 Bunner, Henry Cuyler.  
 By Gabriel Leeb. A. L. Jan. (9:431.)

## C

Cabell, James Branch.  
 By J. M. Howard. R. C. Jan. (2:5.)  
 Cable, George W.  
 By E. F. Pabody. Minn. Hist. Mar., '37. (18:28.)  
 Caldwell, Erskine.  
 By Jonathan Daniels. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jun. 18. (7.)  
 By Otis Ferguson. N. Rep. Jul. 6. (95:258.)  
 By Louis Kronenberger. N.Y. Jun. 25. (64.)  
 By Ulysses Lee. Opp. Sept. (16:281.)  
 By Arnold Shukutoff. N. Mass. Jun. 28. (24.)  
 By William Soskin. Books. Jun. 19. (5.)  
 By Harold Strauss. N.Y. Times. Jun. 19. (7.)  
 By Dorothy Van Doren. Nat. Jun. 25. (148:730.)  
 Cather, Willa.  
 By Robert H. Footman. A. L. May. (10:123.)  
 By Howard Mumford Jones. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Aug. 6. (3.)  
 Chekhov, Anton.  
 Letters. I. L. Oct.-Nov. (171.)  
 Chekhov, Anton.  
 By Lola Kinel. Sto. Jan. (4.)  
 Cobb, Irvin S.  
 Anonymous. Books. Dec. 18. (12.)  
 Conrad, Joseph.  
 By J. D. Gordon. S. P. Oct. (35:613.)

## D

Delafield, E. M.  
 By Margaret Evans. Books. Oct. 23. (10.)  
 By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Oct. 30. (7.)  
 Digges, Jeremiah.  
 By Carl Carmer. Books. May 1. (6.)  
 By Fletcher Pratt. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Apr. 23. (3.)  
 By Robert Van Gelder. N.Y. Times. Apr. 24. (8.)  
 By George F. Willison. Nat. May 7. (146:534.)  
 Dunsany, Lord.  
 By Horace Reynolds. N.Y. Times. Oct. 23. (4.)

## E

Edmonds, Walter D.  
 By Dayton Kohler. Eng. J. Jan. (27:1.)

## F

Farrell, James T.  
 By Howard Baker. So. R. Winter. (3:576.)  
 By Robert Morss Lovett. Eng. J. May, '37. (26:347.)  
 Faulkner, William.  
 By Earle Birney. C. For. Jun. (18:84.)  
 By Kay Boyle. N. Rep. Mar. 9. (94:136.)  
 By Anthony Buttitta. Sat. R. (N.Y.) May 21. (6.)  
 By G. H. C. Q. Q. Winter. (45:558.)  
 By V. F. Calverton. Mod. M. Mar. (11.)

By Bernard De Voto. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Feb. 19. (5.)  
 By Clifton Fadiman. N.Y. Feb. 19. (76.)  
 By Granville Hicks. N. Mass. Feb. 22. (24.)  
 By Alfred Kazin. Books. Feb. 20. (5.)  
 By Louis Kronenberger. Nat. Feb. 19. (146:212.)  
 By Helen Neville. Part. R. Jun. (5:53.)  
**Fechin, Alexandra.**  
 By John Cournos. N.Y. Times. Jan. 16. (6.)  
**Ferber, Edna.**  
 By Isabel Currier. Books. Feb. 13. (5.)  
 By K. S. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Feb. 12. (20.)  
 By Edith H. Walton. N.Y. Times. Feb. 13. (6.)  
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**Forster, E. M.**  
 By George Dangerfield. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Aug. 27. (3.)  
 By N. J. Endicott. C. For. June. (18:88.)  
 By Granville Hicks. N. Mass. Nov. 8. (27.)  
 By John Kenneth Merton. Com. Sept. 23. (28:562.)  
 By Lionel Trilling. N. Rep. Oct. 5. (96:247.)  
 By E. H. W. Q. Q. Autumn. (45:416.)  
 By Morton Dauwen Zabel. Nat. Oct. 22. (147:412.)

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**Gibbs, A. Hamilton.**  
 By Margaret Wallace. N.Y. Times. Jan. 2. (6.)  
**Glasgow, Ellen.**  
 By Henry Seidel Canby. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Sept. 10. (3.)  
**Gorky, Maxim.**  
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 By Eugenia Knipovich. I. L. Nos. 10-11, '37. (155.)  
**Greenwood, Walter.**  
 By John Hersey. Books. Sept. 25. (8.)  
 By W. S. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Sept. 24. (20.)  
 By Jane Spence Southron. N.Y. Times. Oct. 2. (7.)

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**Hardy, Thomas.**  
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 By Manning Hawthorne. Essex. Jan. (74:1.) N.E.Q. Mar. (11:66.)  
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 By Arlin Turner. So. Atl. Q. Apr. (37:132.) N.E.Q. Jun. (11:400.)  
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 By Roger P. McCutcheon. A.L. May. (10:237.)  
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 By Edwin Berry Burgum. N. Mass. Nov. 22. (21.)  
 By Malcolm Cowley. N. Rep. Nov. 2. (96:367.)  
 By Elmer Davis. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Oct. 15. (6.)  
 By Clifton Fadiman. N.Y. Oct. 22. (81.)

By Alfred Kazin. Books. Oct. 16. (5.)  
 By Peter Monro Jack. N.Y. Times. Oct. 23. (4.)  
 By Delmore Schwartz. So. R. Spring. (3:769.)  
 By Edmund Wilson. Nat. Dec. 10. (147:628.)

Henry, O.

By David Boyd. Ana. Oct., '37. (31:579.)

Holtby, Winifred.

Anonymous. Sat. R. (N.Y.) Jan. 8. (7.)  
 By May Lamberton Becker. Books. Jan. 9. (6.) May 8. (4.)  
 By Helen Burlin. N. Mass. Aug. 16. (28.)  
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# MAGAZINE AVERAGES

JANUARY 1 TO DECEMBER 31, 1938

The following table includes the averages of distinctive stories in twelve American periodicals. One, two, and three asterisks are employed to indicate relative distinction. 'Three-asterisk stories' are considered worth reprinting in book form. The list excludes reprints. Figures in columns three and six represent stories with one or more asterisks: figures in columns four and seven, stories with two or more asterisks: figures in columns five and eight, stories with three asterisks.

PERIODICALS	Number of Stories Published	Number of Distinctive Stories Published			Percentage of Distinctive Stories Published		
		*	**	***	*	**	***
		23	14	6	2	61	26
American Prefaces.....	29	29	24	15	100	82	52
Atlantic Monthly.....	104	6	0	0	6	0	0
Cosmopolitan.....	119	83	44	28	69	20	24
Esquire.....	32	20	8	3	63	25	9
Frontier and Midland.....	27	25	20	10	93	74	37
Harper's Magazine.....	21	18	13	5	86	62	24
Prairie Schooner.....	96	20	7	2	21	7	2
Red Book Magazine.....	220	36	6	0	16	3	0
Saturday Evening Post.....	17	12	5	3	71	29	18
Scribner's Magazine.....	10	9	9	7	90	90	70
Southern Review.....	72	69	43	17	96	60	24

The following tables indicate the rank, by number and percentage of distinctive short stories published, of nine periodicals coming within the range of my examination which have published an average of 50 per cent or more of distinctive stories. The list excludes reprints, but not translations.

## BY PERCENTAGE

1. Atlantic Monthly.....	100%	6. Scribner's Magazine.....	71%
2. Story.....	96%	7. Esquire.....	69%
3. Harper's Magazine.....	93%	8. Frontier and Midland.....	63%
4. Southern Review.....	90%	9. American Prefaces.....	61%
5. Prairie Schooner.....	86%		

## BY NUMBER

1. Esquire.....	83	6. Prairie Schooner.....	18
2. Story.....	69	7. American Prefaces.....	14
3. Atlantic Monthly.....	29	8. Scribner's Magazine.....	12
4. Harper's Magazine.....	25	9. Southern Review.....	9
5. Frontier and Midland.....	20		

The following periodicals have published during the same period seven or more 'two-asterisk' stories. The list excludes reprints, but not translations.

1. Esquire.....	44	8. Harper's Bazaar (N.Y.) (May-Dec.)	13
2. Story.....	43	9. New Masses.....	12
3. Atlantic Monthly.....	24	10. Southern Review.....	9
4. New Yorker.....	24	11. Frontier and Midland.....	8
5. Hairenik.....	22	12. Coronet.....	8
6. Harper's Magazine.....	20	13. Red Book Magazine.....	7
7. Prairie Schooner.....	13		

The following periodicals have published during the same period four or more 'three-asterisk' stories. The list excludes reprints, but not translations.

1. Esquire.....	28	6. New Yorker.....	9
2. Story.....	17	7. Southern Review.....	7
3. Atlantic Monthly.....	15	8. Hairenik.....	5
4. Harper's Magazine.....	10	9. Prairie Schooner.....	5
5. Harper's Bazaar (N.Y.) (May-Dec.)	10		

# DISTINCTIVE SHORT STORIES IN AMERICAN MAGAZINES

1938

**NOTE.** Only distinctive stories are listed. The list includes a few American stories published in British periodicals. One, two or three asterisks are used to indicate relative distinction. Titles of stories with three asterisks qualify for the 'Roll of Honor.' The figures in parentheses refer to the volume and page number of the magazine. Where successive issues of a magazine are not paged consecutively, only the page number is given. While every effort has been made to indicate correctly the nationality of the authors, I assume no personal responsibility for the accuracy of my classification in this or in other lists.

## I. AMERICAN AUTHORS

### A

ADAMS, BILL.

\*\*God Rest You, Merry Gentlemen. Atl. Dec. (162:758.)  
\*Ruby and Camelia. Harp. M. July. (177:131.)

ADAMS, CASWELL.

\*My Guy's a Piperoo. Esq. Jun. (54.)

ADDINGTON, L. F.

\*In Case Of Death. Esq. Feb. (46.)

ACOSTINO, GUIDO D'.

\*\*Once He Had A Friend. Cor. Jul. (67.)

ALLAN, TED.

\*Gun is Watered. N. Mass. Jan. 11. (25.)  
\*\*Lisa. Harp. M. Jul. (177:187.)

ALLEN, ELLISABETH.

\*Lunch Hour. Frontier. Summer. (18: 255.)

AMBROSINO, RALPH.

\*Seventh Lesson. Pr. S. Winter. (12:316.)

AMIRIAN, LEMYEL.

\*\*Appointment. Hai. Jul. 22. (4.)

\*Escape. Hai. Dec. 9. (5.)

\*\*\*Fugue in Four and a Million Voices. Hai. Jun. 24. (4.)

APPEL, BENJAMIN.

\*Hooker. Fight. Aug. (16.)

\*Tear Gas. Fight. Nov. (8.)

APPLETON, ADELINA.

\*\*Masterpiece. Sto. Nov.-Dec. (53.)

ARDOONY, ZEPURE.

\*Broken Records. Hai. Jun. 17. (5.)

\*Love In Winter. Hai. Dec. 16. (4.)

ARMSTRONG, ANNE W.

\*Branner House. Yale. Mar. (27:587.)

ASWELL, JAMES R.

\*\*Man Gets to Thinking. Harp. M. Mar. (176:405.)

AVENER, JEAN.

\*\*Saint Sara. Manu. (31.)

### B

BABB, SANORA.

\*Old Man Waiting. Kans. (98.)

BAKER, MARTIN.

\*Take It Easy, Kid. N. Rep. Mar. 23. (94:189.)

BAKJIAN, MARDIE JAY.

\*Ardash the Armenian. Hai. Oct. 28. (4.)

\*\*Blonde and the Bozo. Hai. Jul. 22. (5.)

\*\*Garabed's Wedding. Pr. S. Winter. (12:310.)

\*Life to Remember. Hai. Jun. 10. (5.)

\*\*Lost Melody. Hai. Sept. 16. (5.)

\*\*Man on the Third Floor. Hai. Jul. 29. (5.)

\*\*Strikebreaker. Hai. Jul. 8. (5.)

\*Vision. Hai. Sept. 23. (4.)

BARNES, NANCY.

\*Best Years. Sto. May. (22.)

BARNETT, JOEL.

\*'Ginger.' MacL. Sept. 1. (14.)

\*Man of Ice. S.E.P. Aug. 6. (16.)

BECK, WARREN.

\*\*Blue Sash. Sto. Mar. (57.)

\*\*Ike Boyd. N.A. Rev. Summer. (245: 262.)

BEERS, GRIFFITH.

\*\*Roadhouse. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Aug. (108.)

BENEDICT, LIBBY.

\*\*While Millionaires Are Made. L. Merc. Mar. (37:509.)

BENÉT, STEPHEN VINCENT.

\*Cat Named Dempsey. S.E.P. Jul. 30. (12.)

\*Die-Hard. S.E.P. Sept. 17. (10.)

\*Doc Mellhorn and the Pearly Gates. S.E.P. Dec. 24. (23.)

\*\*Jacob and the Indians. S.E.P. May 14. (12.)

\*You Don't Really Live Till You're Here. S.E.P. Apr. 9. (8.)

BENSON, SALLY.

\*Birds in Their Nests Agree. N.Y. Nov. 12. (24.)

\*Carry Me Back. N.Y. Aug. 27. (15.)

\*Face of a Saint. N.Y. Aug. 13. (16.)

\*Friend of the Family. N.Y. May 7. (17.)

\*\*\*Home Atmosphere. N.Y. Mar. 12. (19.)

\*House That Love Built. N.Y. May 28.  
(14.)

\*My Cup Runneth Over. N.Y. Jun. 18.  
(15.)

\*Profession: Housewife. N.Y. Jul. 2.  
(13.)

BERGER, MEYER.  
\*Patriot. N.Y. Dec. 17. (18.)

BESTOR, CONSTANCE.  
\*\*Just Say the Word. Sto. Jul.-Aug.  
(65.)

BEZZERIDES, A. I.  
\*\*Champion Runner. Hai. Nov. 4. (5.)

\*Crazy Jake. Hai. Jul. 8. (4.)

\*\*Dreamers. Hai. Aug. 19. (4.)

\*Yonni's Wife. Sto. Jan. (55.)

BIDWELL, WALTER E.  
\*\*Staring. Pr. S. Spring. (12:51.)

BIRK, GENEVIEVE BLANE.  
\*\*Table. Sto. Jul.-Aug. (19.)

BLEEKER, L. K.  
\*Dawn at Sunset. S.L.T. Jun. 5.

BLEY, EDGAR S.  
\*\*\*Drum-Truck Came. Part. R. Apr. (41.)

BOHANON, MARY LOUISE.  
\*Nothing Changes. Opp. Jun. (16:177.)

BOLTON, HARRY.  
\*Old Battler. Esq. Nov. (61.)

\*\*Rosebuds of the River Queen. Esq. Oct.  
(82.)

BOND, NELSON S.  
\*\*Man Who Walked Through Glass. Esq.  
Nov. (67.)

BOYLE, KAY.  
\*\*Baron and the Chemist. N.Y. Feb. 26.  
(19.)

\*Ben. N.Y. Dec. 24. (15.)

\*\*\*Bridegroom's Body. So. R. Summer.  
(4:58.)

\*\*Life Sentence. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Jun.  
(42.)

\*\*\*Taxi Ride. Seven. Autumn. (16.)

BRACE, ERNEST.  
\*Cowards of Us All. N. Mass. Jun. 14.  
(136.)

BRAND, MILLEN.  
\*\*When You Spend a Dollar. N. Mass.  
Oct. 25. (17.)

BRANDT, STERLING.  
\*You Do Solemnly Swear....' Esq.  
Mar. (46.)

BRESLOW, WILLIAM J.  
\*Death, the Mirror. Esq. Jun. (77.)

BROOKS, WALTER.  
\*He Whose Laugh Lasts. Atl. Mar. (16:  
375.)

\*\*Plant Early — Two Feet Apart. Atl.  
Jan. (161:95.)

\*\*Seen By Appointment Only. Atl. Jul.  
(162:61.)

BROWN, DEE.  
\*Afternoon in August. Hin. No. 11. (71.)

BUCK, PEARL S.  
\*Tiger! Tiger! Cos. Apr. (22.)

BURNS, PAUL.  
\*\*What Shall I Say? Sto. Apr. (76.)

CAHN, HARRIET.  
\*\*Second Catherine. So. R. Spring.  
(3:714.)

CALDWELL, EVANTHA.  
\*Wrath of God. House. Apr. (6.)

CALDWELL, RONALD.  
\*\*\*Vision in the Sea. N.M.Q. Aug. (5:143.)

CAMPBELL, ALAN.  
\*Waiting for Ernst. N.Y. Sept. 17. (83.)

CARR, A. H. Z.  
\*\*\*Act of Treason. Cor. Dec. (3.)

CARROLL, GLADYS HASTY.  
\*Speaking to Hannah. Red Bk. Feb. (40.)

CARROW, EFFIE.  
\*Too Much Pigment. Opp. Apr. (16:148.)

CHEEVER, JOHN.  
\*\*\*Frère Jacques. Atl. Mar. (161:379.)

CHRISTOWE, STOYAN.  
\*\*M. Gurkin Discovers America. Sto.  
Jul.-Aug. (9.)

CLARK, GEAN.  
\*\*\*Indian on the Road. Manu. (42.)

CLURMAN, ROBERT.  
\*\*\*Raincoat. Sto. Nov.-Dec. (20.)

COATES, ROBERT M.  
\*\*\*Accident in the Field. N.Y. Dec. 3. (23.)

\*\*\*Beginning of a Journey. N.Y. Sept. 10.  
(23.)

\*\*Cry. Red Bk. Mar. (29.)

\*\*\*Passing Through. N.Y. Jul. 9. (13.)

COCHRAN, ROBERT W.  
\*\*Foot of the Giant. Sto. Jul.-Aug. (43.)

COHN, DAVID L.  
\*\*\*Black Troubadour. Atl. Jul. (162:57.)

COLLINS, LOIS IRVINE.  
\*\*Fightin' Cock. Frontier. Autumn.  
(19:1.)

COOK, WHITFIELD.  
\*Good Wife. A. Merc. Jan. (43:77.)

CORNING, HOWARD MCKINLEY.  
\*\*To Be a Great Man. Frontier. Summer.  
(18:215.)

COZZENS, J. G.  
\*Son and Heir. S.E.P. Apr. 2. (10.)

CRANSTON, PEABODY.  
\*Famous Peabody Fusilliade. Sto. Sept.-  
Oct. (45.)

CROWLEY, MICHAEL.  
\*When I was a General. Esq. Feb. (62.)

CULKIN, PHILIP HARLEY.  
\*\*Four Woodcuts of Delia. Sto. Mar. (45.)

CULLEN, HAZEL.  
\*Liebeslied. U.R. Summer. (4:233.)

CULVER, CHRISTINE.  
\*\*\*Girl from the Valley. Sto. Sept.-Oct. (9.)

CURRIER, ISABEL.  
\*They Come and Go. N.Y. Jun. 25. (36.)

D

DALE, GEOFFREY.  
\*Fern Lady. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Sept. 15.  
(110.)

DANIELSON, RICHARD ELY.  
\*\*\*Corporal Hardy. Atl. Nov. (162:643.)

## DE JONG, DAVID CORNEL.

\*Cain's Brother. Red Bk. Feb. (46.)

\*\*\*Flood in the Night. Atl. Sept. (162:318.)

\*Home to Roost. Yan. Oct. (12.)

\*\*\*Only Fools Go to America. Atl. Mar. (161:295.)

\*Winter Decision. House. Oct. (4.)

## DE LISLE, WILLIAM.

\*\*Fat and the Lean. Pr. S. Winter. (12:235.)

## DE VRIES, PETER.

\*\*It Goes Like This. Cor. Nov. (122.)

## DERLETH, AUGUST.

\*\*Any Day Now. Red Bk. May. (26.)

\*\*Buck in The Bottoms. Yale. Sept. (28:82.)

\*Girl in Time Lost. Cor. Dec. (31.)

\*\*\*Sisters. U. R. Autumn. (11.)

## DIGGES, JEREMIAH.

\*\*No Salt Pork. Esq. Apr. (59.)

\*\*Sea Witch of Gloucester. Esq. Feb. (52.)

\*\*Slickbritches. Sto. Apr. (27.)

## DOBIE, J. FRANK.

\*Pedro Loco. S.W. Jul. (23:417.)

## DONALDSON, DOROTHY.

\*\*Old Crow. Sto. Nov.-Dec. (43.)

## DONATO, PIETRO DI.

\*\*\*It's Cheaper to Be ——. Esq. Nov. (49.)

## DOS PASSOS, JOHN.

\*\*Migratory Worker. Part. R. Jan. (16.)

## DRACO, F.

\*\*Feast of Flesh. Sto. Jun. (39.)

## DRAPER, EDYTHE SQUIER.

\*As Her Father Her Mother. U.R. Summer. (4:271.)

## DREISER, THEODORE.

\*\*\*Tithe of the Lord. Esq. Jul. (36.)

## DREYER, MARTIN.

\*Laughter in the Tivoli. Esq. Sept. (67.)

\*\*Seance with Pat. Pr. S. Summer. (12:119.)

## DURANTY, WALTER.

\*Heads Make Brains. Col. Feb. 12. (50.)

## E

## EDMONDS, WALTER D.

\*Arrival of the Lily Dean. S.E.P. May 7. (5.)

\*\*\*Moses. Atl. Aug. (162:143.)

\*Pay to the Order of John Ames. S.E.P. Nov. 26. (5.)

\*Young Ames. S.E.P. Mar. 19. (8.)

\*Young Ames Goes Down the River. S.E.P. Jul. 30. (5.)

## EISENBERG, EMANUEL.

\*\*Frieze of Penelope Weaving. Sto. Jun. (79.)

## EISENBERG, FRANCES.

\*Gingerbread Man. Tan. Dec. (3.)

## ELLIOTT, BERNICE.

\*\*Farm Scene. L.L. Summer. (86.)

\*\*Tenants. L.L. Nov. (77.)

## ELLISON, GEORGE.

\*\*\*Lazarus at the Sycamore. Pr. S. Winter. (12:285.)

## ELLISON, HAL.

\*\*Bless Me, Father. N.M.Q. Aug. (5:159.)

\*\*\*Mammy Lay Quiet. Pr. S. Spring. (12:1.)

\*\*\*Rat is Mouse. Sto. Nov.-Dec. (33.)

## ENANDER, H. L.

\*Education of Barillas. Cor. Sept. (7.)

## F

## FANTE, JOHN.

\*None So Blind. W.H.C. Apr. (19.)

## FARRELL, JAMES T.

\*Fate of a Hero. N.A. Rev. Spring (245:III.)

## FAST, HOWARD.

\*\*Spoil the Child. S.E.P. Aug. 6. (7.)

## FERGUSON, CHARLES W.

\*\*He Gave Him a Stone. Harp. M. Feb. (176:298.)

## FICKE, ARTHUR DAVISON.

\*All Roads to Graves Are Dusty. Esq. Mar. (56.)

\*Apotheosis of Mrs. Morton. Esq. Jul. (56.)

\*Call Me Stanley. Esq. Nov. (78.)

\*Conquest of Mexico. Esq. Apr. (44.)

\*Mrs. Morton's Enemy. Esq. May. (40.)

\*Twenty-First Lion. Esq. Jun. (56.)

## FITZGERALD, F. SCOTT.

\*Financing Finnegan. Esq. Jan. (41.)

## FLECK, CARL.

\*\*Drums of Peace. Manu. (4.)

## FLIGELMAN, BELLE.

\*Hark! Hark! The Dogs Do Bark. Frontier. Spring. (18:179.)

## FORD, COREY.

\*I Wonder What Happened to Tony. Cos. Jul. (38.)

## FOWLER, MANET.

\*\*Hall of Liberty. Opp. Apr. (16:112.)

## FRANK, GEROLD.

\*Every Darn Time. N.Y. Aug. 6. (32.)

## FRESNOZA, DELFIN.

\*\*Man Who Walked into the Sea. Phil. Jun. (35:284.)

\*\*Tandoz. Phil. Dec. (35:566.)

## FRIEDLANDER, MORT.

\*\*Municipal Anthem. Sto. Jun. (32.)

## FROST, FRANCES.

\*Piano Prelude. Yale. Dec. (27:382.)

## FUCHS, DANIEL.

\*Amazing Mystery at Storick, Dorschi, Pfraumber, Inc. Scr. Feb. (19.)

\*\*Last Fall. S.E.P. Mar. 5. (16.)

## FURMAN, LUCY.

\*Law on Wolfrun. C.G. Dec. (20.)

## G

## GALE, ZONA.

\*Morning Smile. Red Bk. Jan. (33.)

## GALLICO, PAUL.

\*Swell-head. Cos. Sept. (38.)

## GAMBOA, DELFIN ZERRER.

\*Prodigal. Gra. Sept. 1. (14.)

GARTNER, CHLOE.  
 \*\*Giuseppe Goes Home. Pr. S. Fall. (12:198.)  
 \*Prelude to Exile. Frontier. Autumn. (19:17.)

GASPAR, SAMUEL.  
 \*\*Fakhreddin. Sto. Apr. (56.)

GELLEHORN, MARTHA.  
 \*High Finance. N.Y. Dec. 3. (102.)

GERRY, BILL.  
 \*\*Ebb of the Tide. Pr. S. Spring. (12:58.)  
 \*Little While to Never. Yan. Feb. (12.)

GHISELIN, BREWSTER.  
 \*\*Sea Lion. Sto. Nov.-Dec. (40.)

GIBBS, WOLCOTT.  
 \*Red Sea Sacrifice. N.Y. Jan. 15. (19.)

GILL, BRENDAN.  
 \*\*Fate of Man. N.Y. Oct. 15. (18.)

GODIN, ALEXANDER.  
 \*\*Brown Coat. N. Mass. May 10. (100.)  
 \*My Father: A Portrait. Tan. Oct. (3.)

GOODMAN, STEVE.  
 \*\*It's an Old Story. Sto. Feb. (77.)

GORDON, CAROLINE.  
 \*\*Enemy. So. R. Spring. (3:723.)

GREGORY, ALYSE.  
 \*\*Golden Key. Corn. Dec. (158:817.)

GREGORY, Lemuel L.  
 \*Bravery Is Not Thinking. Tan. Dec. (26.)

GRINNELL, SARAH.  
 \*Boathouse. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Dec. (156.)

GRISS, JEAN.  
 \*Temple on the Sand. Am. P. Oct. (4:3.)

GRISSON, IRENE WELCH.  
 \*\*Short Water. Front. Spring. (18:153.)

H

HAGGARD, PAUL.  
 \*\*Let the Day Perish. Esq. Aug. (32.)  
 \*\*Silver Fleet of Time. Esq. Sept. (28.)

HALE, NANCY.  
 \*\*Always Afternoon. Red Bk. Feb. (18.)  
 \*\*Dusk in the Ragged Mountains. Yan. Nov. (13.)  
 \*Last Time. Red Bk. Oct. (31.)  
 \*Letter to My Love. Red Bk. Nov. (58.)  
 \*\*Other Kinds of Christmas. Red Bk. Jan. (17.)

HALL, JAMES NORMAN.  
 \*Doctor Dogbody's Leg. Red Bk. Jan. (22.) Feb. (36.) Apr. (32.)

HALPER, ALBERT.  
 \*\*\*Prelude. Harp. M. Aug. (177:302.)

HATCHER, HARLAN.  
 \*Seven Mortal Chinamen. Sto. May. (30.)

HAYES, CHARLES.  
 \*My Father Has Brown Eyes. Frontier. Winter. (19:81.)

HELLMAN, LILLIAN.  
 \*\*Bleached Lady. N. Mass. Oct. 11. (20.)

HEMINGWAY, ERNEST.  
 \*\*\*Butterfly and the Tank. Esq. Dec. (51.)  
 \*\*\*Denunciation. Esq. Nov. (39.)

HERBERT, COULTER.  
 \*Seal. Manu. (77.)

HIGGINS, JAMES.  
 \*\*Interview. Sto. Apr. (32.)

HINCKLEY, HELEN.  
 \*Those Who Lean. S.L.T. Aug. 28.

HOFFMAN, PAUL.  
 \*In the Bunkhouse. Atl. Sept. (162:389.)

HOFFMANN, MALCOLM.  
 \*\*\*Fraternity. Sto. Jul.-Aug. (24.)

HORGAN, PAUL.  
 \*\*\*To the Mountains. Atl. Jan. (161:5.)

HORTON, EDWARD.  
 \*Fifty Cents Short of a Bargain. Scr. Aug. (36.)

HUDSON, ALEC.  
 \*Up Periscope! S.E.P. Dec. 31. (5.)

HULL, HELEN.  
 \*Snow in Summer. Sto. Feb. (9.)

HUME, CYRIL.  
 \*Opinion on West Eden. Cor. Sept. (26.)

HUNT, HAMLEN.  
 \*Feathers Blowing. N. Mass. Jul. 12. (157.)  
 \*Only by Chance Are Pioneers Made. Sto. Jun. (49.)

HUNT, MARY FASSETT.  
 \*\*After a Little While. Yale. Sept. (28:164.)  
 \*Refugee. Am.P. Oct. (4:13.)

HURST, FANNIE.  
 \*Mamma and Papa. S.E.P. Nov. 19. (10.)

J

JACKSON, M. WALTHALL.  
 \*\*Fishing for Possum. Yale. Mar. (27:516.)

JENISON, MADGE.  
 \*\*\*True Believer. Harp. M. Aug. (177:262.)

JOFFE, EUGENE.  
 \*\*Winter. Yan. Jan. (30.)

JOHANSON, HUGO.  
 \*\*Barbro and Her Menfolk. Atl. Nov. (162:600.)

JOHNSON, WILLOUGHBY.  
 \*Rabbit Fever. Scr. Apr. (42.)

JONES, IVAN C.  
 \*Shanty Annie. S.L.T. Aug. 7.

JONQUET, GENE.  
 \*He Thought Twice. Esq. Feb. (76.)

K

KANTOR, MACKINLAY.  
 \*Back to Gettysburg. S.E.P. Jul. 2. (18.)  
 \*Circus Cat of Prickly Orange. C.G. Apr. (12.)

\*Dakotahs Coming! S.E.P. Jan. 22. (5.)  
 \*Darkies Are Gay. C.G. Dec. (12.)

\*Dawn's Early Light. Red Bk. Mar. (48.)

\*Gun-Toter of Rosy Ridge. S.E.P. Nov. 12. (5.)

\*Honey on the Border. C.G. Aug. (12.)

\*Star of Prickly Orange. C.G. Feb. (10.)

\*Valedictory. S.E.P. May 28. (5.)

\*Will Ye No' Come Home Again? S.E.P. Dec. 24. (5.)

\*Woman with Kind Hands. S.E.P. Mar. 12. (8.)  
 \*Writing in the Sky. S.E.P. Apr. 16. (14.)  
**KAPUSTIN, HARRY.**  
 \*Cigarette. N. Mass. Jan. 28. (17.)  
 \*Pant Like a Dog. N. Mass. Jul. 12. (147.)  
**KEES, WELDON.**  
 \*Downward and Away. Hin. No. 10. (31.)  
 \*So Cold Outside. Pr. S. Winter. (12:272.)  
**KIMBROUGH, JESS.**  
 \*\*Brown Doughboy. I.L. May. (44.)  
**KLINEFORD, ELMA.**  
 \*\*\*Goofy. Frontier. Summer. (18:238.)  
**KNITTEL, BARBARA ELROD.**  
 \*Homecoming. Sto. Apr. (15.)  
**KOBER, ARTHUR.**  
 \*\*Catastrophe in the Bronx. N.Y. Jul. 23. (21.)  
 \*\*Contretemps in the Bronx. N.Y. Apr. 16. (25.)  
 \*\*Lady from the Bronx. N.Y. Jan. 8. (29.)  
 \*\*Patrons from the Bronx. N.Y. Feb. 5. (17.)  
 \*\*Presents in the Bronx. N.Y. Jun. 4. (18.)  
 \*\*Report in the Bronx. N.Y. Jul. 2. (19.)  
 \*\*Shower in the Bronx. N.Y. May 7. (24.)  
 \*\*Visit in the Bronx. N.Y. Mar. 5. (69.)  
**KOMROFF, MANUEL.**  
 \*\*Dark Wanderer. Esq. Dec. (57.)  
 \*\*Dog from Nowhere. Esq. Oct. (45.)  
 \*\*\*Hara-Kiri of Baron Kura. Esq. Jun. (52.)  
 \*\*In the Name of Liberty. Cor. Oct. (120.)  
 \*\*\*Little Bit of Butter. Esq. Jul. (51.)  
 \*Three Strings of Pearls. Esq. Feb. (42.)  
 \*Through the Terror. Esq. Nov. (56.)  
 \*\*\*What Is a Miracle? Esq. Jan. (36.)  
**KRANTZ, DAVID E.**  
 \*\*Tomorrow Is Another Day. Am. P. May. (3:115.)

## L

**LA FARGE, OLIVER.**  
 \*Little Flower. Esq. Jan. (74.)  
 \*\*Time Watcher. Cor. Aug. (59.)  
 \*\*Young Warrior. Esq. Dec. (95.)  
**L'AMOUR, LOUIS.**  
 \*Admiral. Sto. Mar. (77.)  
**LARSSON, GÖSTA.**  
 \*Spring Evening. Scan. Winter. (26:351.)  
**LE SUEUR, MERIDEL.**  
 \*\*\*Salutation to Spring. Pr. S. Fall. (12:157.)  
**LEVITT, SAUL.**  
 \*\*Pickup. N. Mass. Jan. 11. (47.)  
 \*\*Return. N. Mass. Oct. 18. (20.)  
 \*Tall, Dark Man. N. Mass. May 10. (104.)  
**LINCOLN, VICTORIA.**  
 \*Little Girl — Big Secret. Red Bk. Sept. (52.)  
**LIPPINCOTT, ARTHUR.**  
 \*Land of Milk and Honey. Am. P. Jan. (3:51.)

**LISTER, QUEENE B.**  
 \*River Swing. Frontier. Spring. (18:145.)  
**ULL, RODERICK.**  
 \*World on a Silver Platter. A. Merc. Aug. (44:461.)

## M

**MACALBERT, CORA.**  
 \*Lie With Circumstance. N. Mass. Jun. 21. (17.)  
 \*This is My Sunshine. Cor. Dec. (103.)  
**MCCLARY, THOMAS CALVERT.**  
 \*\*Two Men on a Hatch. Esq. Mar. (52.)  
**MACDONALD, ALAN.**  
 \*\*\*Arm Upraised. Scr. Feb. (39.)  
**MCFEE, WILLIAM.**  
 \*\*Good Shipmaster. Red Bk. Sept. (20.)  
**MACKAY, MARGARET MACPHERSON.**  
 \*\*On a Chinese Scaffold. Sto. Apr. (9.)  
 \*Refugee's Return. Red Bk. Dec. (44.)  
**MCNAMARA, GEORGE A.**  
 \*\*Requiem in a Man-Lock. Esq. Aug. (37.)  
**MADDUX, RACHEL.**  
 \*Mother of a Child. Sto. Apr. (22.)  
 \*We Are Each Other's Children. Sto. Sept.-Oct. (33.)  
**MAGAGNA, ERNESTINE.**  
 \*\*Little Him. Am. P. Nov. (4:19.)  
**MALMGREEN, HENRY PETER.**  
 \*News of Tomorrow. Sto. Apr. (64.)  
**MALONEY, RUSSELL.**  
 \*Out of the Past. N.Y. Dec. 31. (20.)  
**MALTZ, ALBERT.**  
 \*\*\*Happiest Man on Earth. Harp. M. Jun. (177:74.)  
**MANOFF, ARNOLD.**  
 \*Gift from Gimpy. Tan. Feb. (3.)  
 \*\*Land Where My Father Died. Tan. Apr. (6.)  
 \*\*My Grandfather. N. Mass. May 10. (105.)  
**MARCHE, WILLIAM.**  
 \*Haircut in Toulouse. Pr. S. Winter. (12:262.)  
 \*Runagate Niggers. Cor. May. (29.)  
 \*Time and Leigh Brothers. Tan. Dec. (9.)  
 \*\*\*Tune the Old Cow Died To. Am. P. Dec. (4:35.)  
**MARCUS, PAUL.**  
 \*\*\*Good-bye. Sto. Jul.-Aug. (48.)  
**MARTIN, CHARLES.**  
 \*Old Fool. Yale. Summer. (27:801.)  
**MATTHEWS, HAROLD J.**  
 \*Gawd of Daniel Fergive Me. Esq. Apr. (92.)  
**MAXWELL, WILLIAM.**  
 \*Actual Thing, N.Y. Sept. 3. (16.)  
 \*\*\*Homecoming. N.Y. Jan. 1. (17.)  
 \*River in Venezuela. N.Y. Jun. 25. (15.)  
**MAYBERRY, F. V.**  
 \*Red Ball. Frontier. Winter. (19:109.)  
**MECKFESSEL, WILLIAM.**  
 \*\*Last Summer Isn't This Summer. Sto. Jun. (72.)

## MELIKIAN, JOHN.

\*\*Last Story. *Hai.* Dec. 23. (4.) Dec. 30.  
(4.)  
\*\*Patch of Black Grapes. *Hai.* Aug. 12.  
(5.)

\*\*\*Tom Mix. *Hai.* Nov. 11. (4.)

## MERRICK, ELLIOTT.

\*Lone Wolf. *Scr.* Mar. (26.)  
\*Without Words. *Scr.* Jan. (18.)

## MERRILL, PHYLLIS.

\*\*Tower of Ivory. *Sto.* Nov.-Dec. (27.)

## MEYNIER, GIL.

\*Annette. *Sto.* Jul.-Aug. (35.)

## MITCHELL, JOSEPH.

\*I Couldn't Dope It Out. *N.Y.* Dec. 10.  
(43.)

\*Kind Old Blonde. *N.Y.* Jun. 4. (28.)

## MOFFAT, DONALD.

\*Mr. Pennyfeather Likes the Ladies. *Atl.*  
Sept. (162:350.)

## MOLL, ELICK.

\*\*Memoir of Spring. *Va.* Spring. (14:248.)  
\*\*There Is Still the Night. *Scr.* Dec. (26.)

## MONTGOMERY, CLEONE.

\*Dust. *Rocky.* Spring. (4.)

## MOON, BUCKLIN.

\*Boats for Hire. *Harp. M.* Sept. (177:344.)

## MORANG, ALFRED.

\*Side of a Stove. *Scr.* Feb. (45.)

## MULLER, EDWIN.

\*Mountain Man. *Col.* Jan. 1. (16.)

## N

## NATHAN, ROBERT.

\*\*High Hat. *N.Y.* Mar. 26. (17.)  
\*\*Journey of Tapiola. *Atl.* May. (161:595.)

## NEAGOE, PETER.

\*\*\*Drum Beat in Harvest Time. *Esq.* Feb.  
(70.)

## NEHERBON, WILLIAM.

\*\*Surplice for the Father. *Sto.* Jul.-Aug.  
(53.)

## NEWBORG, KATHERINE.

\*On Earth as It Is in Heaven. *Am. P.*  
Summer. (3:157.)

## NIN, ANAIS.

\*\*\*Birth. *T.Y.* Fall-Winter. (132.)

## NOLAND, FELIX.

\*You Were So Young. *S.E.P.* Jan. 8. (12.)

## O

## ODLUM, JEROME.

\*Turn on the Screw. *Esq.* Mar. (66.)

## O'HARA, JOHN.

\*And You Want a Mountain. *N.Y.* Jun.  
11. (22.)

\*Are We Leaving Tomorrow? *N.Y.* Mar.  
19. (17.)

\*Cold House. *N.Y.* Apr. 2. (17.)

\*Ex-Pal. *N.Y.* Nov. 26. (20.)

\*Invite. *N.Y.* Dec. 10. (27.)

\*No Mistakes. *N.Y.* Sept. 17. (20.)

\*Pal Joey. *N.Y.* Oct. 22. (23.)

## OLMSTED, STANLEY.

\*\*Testimonial. *Sto.* Jun. (63.)

## OLSON, TED.

\*\*Cabin Fever. *Sto.* Mar. (81.)

## O'SULLIVAN, VINCENT.

\*\*\*In Quiet. *Dub. M.* Apr.-Jun. (13:63.)

## P

## PAGANO, JO.

\*\*Daisybelle. *Atl.* Dec. (162:829.)

## PARKER, DOROTHY.

\*\*\*Clothe the Naked. *Scr.* Jan. (31.)

## PARSONS, ETHEL BOYCE.

\*Scholars in Fête. *U.R.* Autumn. (53.)

## PATTERSON, ELIZABETH GREGG.

\*Lily. *Am. P.* Nov. (4:29.)

## PAUL, LOUIS.

\*Mrs. Andrews' Rooming House. *Esq.*  
Apr. (49.)

## PEREDA, PRUDENCIO DE.

\*\*My Big Brother Goes Back. *N. Mass.*  
Jul. 26. (20.)

## PIERCE, JR., OVID WILLIAMS.

\*Gub'ner Green. *S.W. Jul.* '37. (22:366.)

\*Midnight Prayer. *S.W. Jan.* (23:189.)

## POLK, MARGUERITE.

\*\*Where the Mules Rolled. *Pr. S.* Fall.  
(12:227.)

## POLK, WILLIAM.

\*Home from the Sea. *Sto.* Apr. (70.)

## POOLE, ERNEST.

\*Lady of Lourdes. *Cor.* Aug. (38.)

## POOLER, JAMES.

\*\*Shago. *Sto.* May. (45.)

## PORTER, KATHERINE ANNE.

\*\*Pale Horse, Pale Rider. *So. R.* Winter.  
(3:417.)

## PRESTON, CHARLES.

\*Local Boy. *Sto.* Jun. (27.)

## R

## RANSOM, A'LELIA.

\*Incident. *Opp.* Apr. (16:147.)

## RICHMOND, ROALDUS.

\*Wyoming Way. *Am. P.* Feb. (3:72.)

## RICHTER, CONRAD.

\*\*Rawhide Knot. *S.E.P.* Jan. 1. (18.)

## RILEY, JAMES WANDS.

\*\*Not Poppy, Nor Mandragora. *Psy.* Oct.  
(25:498.)

## ROBERTS, ELIZABETH MADOK.

\*\*Holy Morning. *Harp. M.* Dec. (178:15.)

## ROBIN, MAX.

\*Guilty. *Q.Q.* Autumn. (45:319.)

## ROBINSON, HUBBELL.

\*Dialogue by Night. *Esq.* Feb. (36.)

## ROSS, LEONARD Q.

\*\*Christopher K\*A\*P\*L\*A\*N. *N.Y.* Oct.  
8. (18.)

\*\*H\*Y\*M\*A\*N K\*A\*P\*L\*A\*N, Samaritan.  
*N.Y.* Oct. 29. (22.)

\*Mr. K\*A\*P\*L\*A\*N Bares His Teeth.  
*N.Y.* Dec. 10. (34.)

\*\*\*Return of H\*Y\*M\*A\*N K\*A\*P\*L\*A\*N  
*N.Y.* Sept. 24. (19.)

## ROSS, SAM.

\*\*Home. *N. Mass.* May 10. (107.)

ROURKE, THOMAS.

\*Fugitives. Scr. Jul. (14.)

RYDELL, HELEN BULLARD.

\*\*I'll Name Her Mary. Pr. S. Summer. (12:94.)

## S

ST. JOSEPH, ELLIS.

\*\*\*Leviathan. Red Bk. Sept. (16.)

SALAZAR, ROBERTO FELIX.

\*\*Nobody Laughed in Yldes. Esq. Mar. (84.)

SALE, RICHARD.

\*\*Seven Waves Away. Scr. Apr. (16.)

SALTZMAN, ELEANOR.

\*\*\*Veiled Sky. Pr. S. Spring. (12:30.)

SANCTON, THOMAS.

\*\*\*Dirty Way. Harp. M. May. (176:571.)

SAROVAN, WILLIAM.

\*\*Anything You Say. T.T. Oct. 8. (19: 1381.)

\*At the Chop Suey Joint on Larkin Street at Two Thirty in the Morning. Hai. Oct. 28. (5.)

\*\*\*Beautiful White Horse. Esq. Jun. (63.)

\*Circus. Col. May 28. (20.)

\*\*\*Death. Hai. Jun. 17. (4.)

\*Empty House. Hai. Dec. 2. (5.)

\*\*Fifty-Yard Dash. Atl. Jun. (161:819.)

\*\*First Day of Summer. Hai. Sept. 16. (4.)

\*\*Flash of the Flashlight and the World-Shaking Question: 'Joe?' Hai. Nov. 4. (4.)

\*I Could Say Bella Bella. N.Y. May 14. (20.)

\*Insurance Salesman, the Peasant, the Rug Merchant, and the Potted Plant. Hai. Apr. 15. (4.)

\*Job. Hai. Oct. 21. (4.)

\*\*Journey to Hanford. Atl. Apr. (161:504.)

\*\*Little Moral Tales. Sto. Sept.-Oct. (40.)

\*\*\*Monumental Arena. Hai. May 20. (4.)

\*Mouse. Hai. Dec. 16. (4.)

\*\*Nice Old-Fashioned Romance, with Love-Lyrics and Everything. Hai. Aug. 26. (4.)

\*\*\*1924 Cadillac for Sale. Hai. Sept. 2. (4.)

\*\*Now Is the Time: A Sideshow of the World Today. Hai. Jun. 3. (4.)

\*\*\*Piano. Hai. Sept. 30. (5.)

\*Poet. Hai. May 13. (4.)

\*\*\*Pomegranate Trees. Atl. Feb. (161:248.)

\*Two Thieves. Hai. May 6. (4.)

\*\*We Want a Touchdown. Sto. Jan. (62.)

\*\*Young Husband and Father. Hai. Jun. 24. (5.)

SCHOENSTEDT, WALTER.

\*\*\*Girl from the River Barge. Esq. Aug. (28.)

\*\*\*Hero of Sussemilken. Esq. Dec. (87.)

SCHULBERG, BUDD WILSON.

\*Hollywood Doctor. Col. Aug. 6. (9.)

\*\*\*Passport to Nowhere. Sto. May. (57.)

SCRIBNER, FREDERICK.

\*Farewell to Beet Juice. Sto. May. (48.)

SEAGER, ALLAN.

\*\*\*Berkshire Comedy. Sto. May. (9.)

SEGER, DOROTHY HART.

\*Grandfather Irrigates. Sto. Nov.-Dec. (15.)

SEIDE, MICHAEL.

\*\*\*Bad Boy from Brooklyn. So. R. Autumn. (4:271.)

\*Death the Bridegroom. Tan. Feb. (12.)

SHAFTER, RICHARD.

\*Beasts of Burden. Phoe. Mar.-May. (1:81.)

SHAW, IRWIN.

\*Borough of Cemeteries. N.Y. Aug. 13. (13.)

SHEPHERD, GEORGE.

\*\*Diamond-Eater. Harp. M. Apr. (176: 540.)

SIMON, CHARLIE MAY.

\*\*Big Brother. U.R. Autumn. (28.)

SIMS, THOMAS.

\*White Man Doan' Unerstan'. Frontier. Summer. (18:231.)

SINCLAIR, JO.

\*Food for Americans. N. Mass. Jul. 12. (148.)

\*\*\*Children at Play. Esq. Jan. (45.)

\*Tony and the W.P.A. N. Mass. Sept. 6. (19.)

SLOCOMBE, GEORGE.

\*\*White Stallion. Esq. Aug. (42.)

SMITH, DALE.

\*\*Trouble with People. Sto. Apr. (39.)

SMITH, JR., JOHN CASWELL.

\*Kaleidoscope in Court. Opp. Jan. (16:15.)

SMITH, REGINALD.

\*\*Bantu Wedding. Harp. M. Nov. (177:587.)

SMITH, ROBERT.

\*Flatfoot. N. Mass. Nov. 15. (17.)

SMITTER, WESSEL.

\*\*\*F.O.B. Detroit. Harp. M. Oct. (177: 464.)

SNELL, GEORGE.

\*Sun Riz an Sot for Ag. Fan. No. 1. (21.)

\*Throwback. N.M.Q. Aug. (5:191.)

SPALDING, HARRY.

\*Blue Brass Laughter. Esq. May. (64.)

SPENCER, CORNELIA.

\*Black Hour. Red Bk. Jan. (46.)

SPINELLI, MARCOS A.

\*Legless Bullfighter. Esq. Jun. (40.)

STAHLBERG, JOHN.

\*Good Christmas. Frontier. Winter. (19:73.)

STEGNER, WALLACE.

\*\*Bugle Song. Va. Summer. (14:407.)

\*\*\*Potter's House. Am. P. Summer. (3:147.)

\*\*Two Wives. Red Bk. Jul. (48.)

STEINBECK, JOHN.

\*\*\*Harness. Atl. Jun. (161:741.)

\*\*\*Snake of One's Own. Esq. Feb. (31.)

STEPHENS, GEORGE D.

\*\*\*Alligator Bait. S.W. Apr. (23:331.)

STEPHENSON, CARL.

\*\*\*Leineninger versus the Ants. Esq. Dec. (98.)

STEVENSON, EDWARD.

\*\*\*Little Father. Esq. Oct. (70.)

STEWART, MARY.

\*You Could 'a Got Me Cheaper. Frontier. Winter, '37. (18:133.)

STILL, JAMES.

\*\*Bat Flight. S.E.P. Sept. 3. (12.)

\*\*Mole-Bane. Atl. Mar. (161:1372.)

\*\*Pigeon Pie. Frontier. Autumn. (19:44.)

\*\*So Large a Thing As Seven. Va. Winter. (14:17.)

\*\*\*Uncle Jolly. Atl. Jul. (162:68.)

STREET, JAMES.

\*Tap Roots. Cos. Dec. (56.)

STRONKS, DOROTHY BETH.

\*God of Our Fathers. Am. P. Mar. (3:88.)

STUART, JESSE.

\*\*\*Brother Spencer Takes a Bride. Esq. Sept. (38.)

\*\*\*Brothers House. Dec. (4.)

\*\*\*Eustacia. House. Jul. (2.)

\*\*\*Gallons or Bushels? A. Merc. Jun. (44:194.)

\*\*\*Jumping the Broom. Col. Jan. 1. (26.)

\*\*\*Love in the Spring. Col. May. 14. (12.)

\*\*\*Vacation in Hell. Esq. Jul. (70.)

\*\*\*When the Foxes Flirt. Esq. May. (52.)

SUNDGAARD, ARNOLD.

\*\*\*What'll I Say to Her Now? Sto. Sept.-Oct. (48.)

SWEETMAN, SYLVIA.

\*\*\*Day at the See. Frontier. Winter, '37. (18:91.)

SWIFT, ALFRED M.

\*\*You Press the Middle Valve Down. Esq. Nov. (73.)

SYLVESTER, HARRY.

\*\*\*Crazy Guy. Esq. Apr. (102.)

\*\*Place of Bulls. Col. Mar. 26. (9.)

## T

TARKINGTON, BOOTH.

\*Fame at Fifteen. S.E.P. Feb. 19. (14.)

\*Little Deal in Ivory. S.E.P. Apr. 2. (12.)

\*Pat for Pit. S.E.P. Oct. 22. (8.)

\*Probably Mrs. Brown. S.E.P. Jul. 23. (12.)

TAYLOR, KRESSMANN.

\*Address Unknown. Sto. Sept.-Oct. (20.)

THANE, ERIC.

\*Dark Retreat. Frontier. Winter, '37. (18:73.)

\*\*Water Hole. Frontier. Winter. (19:95.)

THIELEN, BENEDICT.

\*\*\*Blossoms for My Bride. Scr. Mar. (43.)

\*\*\*Dark Continent. L. Merc. Nov. (39:18.)

\*\*Globe. Harp. M. Jan. (176:124.)

\*\*\*Ship at Anchor. J.o'L. Feb. 4. (749.)

\*\*\*Thunderstorm. Sto. Nov.-Dec. (9.)

THOMAS, DOROTHY.

\*Born Bachelor. W.H.C. Sept. (25.)

\*Car. S.E.P. Jun. 25. (8.)

\*\*Grandma and the Sentimental Traveler. Harp. M. Feb. (176:239.)

\*Ninety-Nine Alarm Clocks. S.E.P. Dec. 3. (12.)

\*Red Chair. C.H.J. Dec. (8.)

\*Teacup Telephone. W.H.C. Nov. (18.)

\*To Die for Love. House. Jan. (2.)

\*To Stay the Night. S.E.P. May 7. (32.)

THOMAS, IOLA.

\*\*Martin's Memorial. Frontier. Autumn. (19:29.)

THOMSEN, MORTIZ.

\*Logged-Off Land. Frontier. Summer. (18:252.)

TODD, ELIZABETH.

\*Back to Nature. Cor. May. (179.)

TRAVER, ROBERT.

\*Fisherman at Night. Sto. May. (78.)

## U

UHLARIK, CARL.

\*Bittersweet Next Year. Pr. S. Winter (12:268.)

UPSON, WILLIAM HAZLETT.

\*— Cordially Yours, Alexander Botts. S.E.P. Dec. 31. (10.)

## V

VALEO, VAL.

\*Just a Mistake, Buddy. N. Mass. Dec. 27. (8.)

VAN ETEN, WINIFRED.

\*Judas Goose. Atl. Feb. (161:174.)

VANCE, JOHN FRAZIER.

\*Deacon. Sto. May. (81.)

## W

WADDELL, MARY R.

\*Tomorrow's A-Comin'. Manu. (110.)

WARE, EDMUND.

\*Reunion in Gehenna. Sto. Jul.-Aug. (26.)

WARREN, ROBERT PENN.

\*\*\*How Willie Proudfit Came Home. So. R. Autumn. (4:299.)

WARREN, VIRGINIA LEE.

\*Surprise. Sto. Feb. (67.)

WATKINS, EDMUND.

\*\*\*At Thy Sweet Voice. So. R. Autumn (4:284.)

\*\*Proxy. Am. P. Summer. (3:154.)

WEBB, WALTER PRESCOTT.

\*\*Singing Snakes of the Karankawas. S.W. Jul., '37. (22:317.)

WEIDMAN, JEROME.

\*\*Explorers. N.Y. May 21. (19.)

\*\*Home by Midnight. A. Merc. Dec. (45:450.)

\*I Thought About This Girl. N.Y. Jan. 8. (68.)

\*Smart Dope. Col. Jun. 11. (18.)

WELLER, GEORGE. *We Don't Know You. N.Y. Aug. 13. (38.)	WOLFERT, IRA. ***Finally Harriet. Harp. M. Oct. (177: 528.)
WELTY, EUDORA. ***Curtain of Green. So. R. Autumn. (4:292.)	***Way the Luck Runs. Harp. M. Nov. (177:637.)
**Old Mr. Grenada. So. R. Spring. (3:707.)	WRIGHT, EUGENE. ***White Camel. Harp. M. Apr. (176:458.)
***Whistle. Pr. S. Fall. (12:210.)	**Willow Fly. Harp. M. May. (176:615.)
WERNER, HEINZ. ***Black Tobias and the Empire. Esq. May. (36.)	WRIGHT, FRANCES F. *Worry No More, Queen Sheba. Sto. May. (39.)
WESTBROOK, JR., FRANCIS. ***Big Shot. Frontier. Autumn. (19:39.)	WRIGHT, RICHARD. ***Bright and Morning Star. N. Mass. May 10. (97.)
WHITE, CALVIN STUART. *Raid on Nantao. Esq. Apr. (50.)	***Fire and Cloud. Sto. Mar. (6.)
WHITEHAND, ROBERT. *Fragile Bud. Am. P. Mar. (3:83.)	Z
WIGGAM, LIONEL. *Voyage from Moji. Harp. M. Jan. (170:179.)	ZACKS, ROBERT. *Supreme Pinnacle. Pr. S. Summer. (12:106.)
WILLIAMSON, SCOTT GRAHAM. *Social Struggle. Sto. Feb. (81.)	ZARA, LOUIS. *Sailing Date. Cor. Nov. (109.)
WILSON, MICHAEL. ***He Sings in the City. Sto. May. (16.)	ZINBERG, LEN. **Champ. Cor. Apr. (8.)
WINETWIG, BEYER. *Invincible Armada. Cor. Jun. (31.)	**For His Kid. Cor. Oct. (37.)
WINN, DALE. *Butterfly Gold. S.L.T. Aug. 14. or 21.	**Quiet and Safe. N. Mass. Jul. 12. (152.)
WISER, MILTON U. **Fingers. Am. P. Dec. (4:38.)	*Way a Son Should Be. N. Mass. Nov. 29. (17.)
WOLFE, THOMAS. ***Chickamauga. Yale. Dec. (27:274.)	*Peaceful Death. Esq. Jan. (64.)
*Company. N. Mass. Jan. 11. (33.)	ZUGSMITH, LEANE. **Mr. and Mrs. H. N.Y. Mar. 26. (18.)

## II. CANADIAN AUTHORS

ARMSTRONG, MATT MURRAY. *Rail. C. For. Jan. (17:352.)	***It Had To Be Done. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Sept. 1. (91.)
BROWN, William. *Hired Man's Tale. C. For. Apr. (17: 448.)	***New Coat. Esq. Dec. (66.)
CALLAGHAN, MORLEY. ***Consuming Fire. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Aug. (76.)	***Sentimentalists. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Nov. (90.)
***Fugitive. N.A. Rev. Summer. (245: 330.)	***White Pony. N.Y. Aug. 27. (20.)
	RAVENHILL, JOHN. *Hero Returns. C. For. Mar. (17:420.)
	ROSS, SINCLAIR. *Lamp at Noon. Q.Q. Spring. (45:30.)

## III. BRITISH AND IRISH AUTHORS

ANGUS-BUTTERWORTH, L. M. *At the Jonah and Whale. Sto. Mar. (42.)	BELL, NEIL. *In the Dark. Sto. Jan. (53.)
ARMSTRONG, ANTHONY. **Best Boy I Ever Had. N.Y. Dec. 10. (29.)	BERNERS, LORD. **Camel. Sto. Jan. (9.)
BATES, RALPH. ***Forty-Third Division. Harp. M. Dec. (178:49.) Jan. '39.	COLOETE, STUART. **Too Much Water. S.E.P. Oct. 22. (20.)
***In the Midst of Death We Live. Esq. Oct. (64.)	COLLIER, JOHN. *Wedding Cake. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Dec. (87.)
**Jarama Ballad. Fight. Sept. (16.)	CONNER, REARDEN. **Flowers. House. Jun. (3.)
BEACHCROFT, T. O. ***Erne from the Coast. Atl. Apr. (161: 539.)	COPPARD, A. E. *Gudgeon and the Squirrel. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Nov. (83.)

CORKERY, DANIEL.  
\*As Benefits Forgot. Colum. Sept. (3.)

DUNSANY, LORD.  
\*\*\*Development of the Rillswood Estate. Atl. Oct. (162:522.)

ERTZ, SUSAN.  
\*\*Lullaby. Harp. M. Aug. (177:248.)  
\*\*Parting Is Such Sweet Sorrow. Harp. M. Aug. (177:250.)  
\*Two Birthdays. Harp. M. Jun. (177: 9.)

FOOTMAN, DAVID.  
\*Forever England. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Jun. (58.)

HARE, MARTIN.  
\*\*Permanents. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Dec. (96.)

HARRIS, CLARE SPARKES.  
\*\*\*Negative of a Man. Sto. Nov.-Dec. (58.)

HOUSEHOLD, GEOFFREY.  
\*\*\*Delilah of the Back Stairs. Sto. Jul.-Aug. (70.)  
\*\*\*Hell Needs a Chaplain. Atl. Mar. (161: 383.)  
\*\*\*Irishman and a Jew. Atl. Oct. (162: 450.)

JAMESON, STORM.  
\*\*Day at the Zoo. Atl. May. (161:683.)

KNIGHT, ERIC.  
\*All Yankees Are Liars. S.E.P. Jan. 15. (16.)  
\*Lassie Come-Home. S.E.P. Dec. 17. (10.)  
\*\*\*Never Come Monday. Esq. Mar. (36.)  
\*\*Strong in the Arms. Esq. Apr. (56.)  
\*\*Time for the Pie-Boy. Esq. Jan. (37.)

MC LAVERTY, MICHAEL.  
\*Trout. Colum. Feb. (5.)

MAUGHAM, W. SOMERSET.  
\*Sanatorium. Cos. Dec. (26.)

MILLIN, SARAH GERTRUDE.  
\*\*I Did This Thing. Sto. Feb. (58.)

MITCHISON, NAOMI.  
\*Eleutheria. N. Mass. Nov. 1. (19.)

O'CONNOR, FRANK.  
\*\*\*Flowering Trees. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Aug. (66.)

O'FAOLÁIN, SEÁN.  
\*\*\*Three Clever Sisters. Sto. Jun. (58.)

O'FLAHERTY, LIAM.  
\*\*\*Brosnan. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Sept. 1. (74.)  
\*\*\*Galway Bay. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Nov. (64.)  
\*\*\*Water Hen. Esq. Aug. (59.)

PRITCHETT, V. S.  
\*\*\*Page and Monarch. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Dec. (78.)

RAO, RAJA.  
\*Cow of the Barricades. Asia. Aug. (38: 483.)

SITWELL, OSBERT.  
\*\*\*Champagne for the Old Lady. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Dec. (74.)  
\*\*Touching Wood. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Sept. 15. (95.)

STERN, G. B.  
\*Amende Honorable. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Aug. (89.)  
\*\*"Current Mrs. Barnaby." Harp. M. Aug. (177:233.)

STRONG, L. A. G.  
\*\*\*Ails of Clonbocketty. Esq. Aug. (38.)  
\*\*\*At the Barber's. Atl. Aug. (162:208.)

WALPOLE, HUGH.  
\*\*Head in Green Bronze. N.Y. Feb. 26. (23.)

WESTERBY, ROBERT.  
\*\*Game of Jiggery-Poker. Esq. May. (86.)  
\*\*\*Money on Morgan. Esq. Mar. (72.)

WOOLF, VIRGINIA.  
\*\*\*Duchess and the Jeweler. Harp. B. (N.Y.) May. (74.)

WYLIE, I. A. R.  
\*Shadow of the Swastika. Cos. Jul. (42.)

YOUNG, FRANCIS BRETT.  
\*Very Gallant Gentleman. Red Bk. Feb. (24.)

## IV. TRANSLATIONS

BARSEGHIAN, BERJOUHL. (*Armenian*).  
\*Margar Agha. Hai. Jul. 15. (4.)

GORBATOV, BORIS. (*Russian*).  
\*\*Friendship. I.L. Jun. (47.)

GORKY, MAXIM. (*Russian*).  
\*\*At the Salt Mines. I.L. Jun. (30.)  
\*\*Dividing-Up. I.L. Jun. (38.)  
\*\*\*Rendezvous. I.L. Jun. (42.)

HUNYADY, SÁNDOR. (*Hungarian*).  
\*Clever Grandma. Esq. Oct. (41.)  
\*Five-Pengö Girl. Esq. Jan. (54.)  
\*Laughing Don Juan. Esq. Sept. (30.)  
\*Pluto, the Hound of Heaven. Esq. Aug. (92.)  
\*Pomp and Its Circumstances. Esq. Mar. (42.)  
\*President's Report. Esq. Feb. (54.)

\*Rape of the Tooth. Esq. May. (46.)  
\*Stepmother. Esq. Jul. (42.)  
\*Uncle János' Devotion. Esq. Apr. (60.)  
\*Underworld Suitor. Esq. Jun. (46.)

KAFKA, FRANZ. (*German*).  
\*\*\*Blumenfeld, an Elderly Bachelor. Part. R. Fall. (6:54.) Winter.

KNORRE, FYODOR. (*Russian*).  
\*\*Unknown Comrade. I.L. Sept. (39.)

LATZKO, ANDREAS. (*Hungarian*).  
\*\*\*Marcia Reale. Sto. Jun. (9.)

MAUROIS, ANDRÉ. (*French*).  
\*Case of Conscience. Esq. Apr. (39.)  
\*Devil in the Mine. Esq. Sept. (34.)  
\*Schoolboy's Return. Esq. Oct. (51.)

MOBERG, VILHELM. (*Swedish*).  
\*Widower. Scan. Sept. (26:239.)

NEUMANN, ROBERT. ( <i>German.</i> ) *Man Hunt in Germany. Esq. Jun. (66.)	SHIMAKI, KENSAKU. ( <i>Japanese.</i> ) **From a Japanese Prison. N. Mass. Feb. 8. (57.)
RAFFL. ( <i>Armenian.</i> ) **Bibi-Sharabani. Hai. Sept. 9. (4.) Sept. 16. (5.)	SIVLE, PER. ( <i>Norwegian.</i> ) *Hole in the Wall. Scan. Jun. (26:158.)
SAINT-EXUPÉRY, ANTOINE DE. ( <i>French.</i> ) *Wild Garden. Harp. B. (N.Y.) Oct. (85.)	SZEP, ERNO. ( <i>Hungarian.</i> ) *Alien Sortow. Cor. Oct. (138.)
SANDEMOSE, AKSEL. ( <i>Norwegian.</i> ) *Murder in Gayesgayey. Scan. Mar. (26: 63.)	VAILLANT-COUTURIER, PAUL. ( <i>French.</i> ) **Manifestation. I.L. No. 12. (20.)
	ZWEIG, ARNOLD. ( <i>German.</i> ) ***Plea to Richelieu. Cor. Aug. (45.)

